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A Practical COMMENTARY, UPON THE First Epistle General of St. *Peter*,

VOL. II.

Containing the Third, Fourth and Fifth CHAPTERS.

By the Most Reverend

ROBERT LEIGHTON, D. D.

Some-time Archbishop of *Glasgow*.

Published after his death, at the request of his Friends.

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TO THE

Chriſtian Reader.

THE following Diſcourſes of our moſt Reverend Author contain his judicious and pious Thoughts, upon the Third Chapter to the end of the Firſt Epiſtle of St. Peter, which together with the Commentary on the Firſt and Second Chapters, publiſhed the laſt year, make a compleat and uſeful Explication of that whole Epiſtle. They might have been all of one Impreſſion, and ſo have come into thy hands at the ſame time, and in one Volume, had not ſome prudent conſiderations oblig'd us to change the Printer: However we have taken care ſo to print this Second Part, that it may conveniently be bound up with the firſt; and there is little loſs by the delay, but that of time, which perhaps is not ſo much neither, but that it may (with more profit to thee) be happily redeemed.

I know that ſome do not reliſh the phraſe and contexture of ſuch Diſcourſes; but I am on the other hand aſſured by others, very able and competent judges of ſuch performances, that they are highly valuable in their whole ſcope and tendency: for they think that they not only contain the purity of Doctrine according to Scripture, but alſo the life and ſpirit of Chri-

Chriſtian Morals; and that they happily cement together, and bear in upon the heart right notions of God and Religion with ſolid Piety: In a word, that, as they are written by a Primitive Spirit and in a plain Stile, ſo they may, through Gods grace, ſow the Seeds of Primitive Devotion, which is too much worn out in this Age; the ſeat whereof is more in the Heart, than in the Head. If they ſerve in any meaſure thoſe great ends, our labour is highly rewarded.

Let ſuch then, as ſhall reap this benefit by theſe well deſigned Papers, be pleaſed to know, that it is not ſo much to me, as to the Pious Zeal and Care of our Great and now Bleſſed Authors ſurviving Relations, that they owe this Happy Enjoyment: whoſe Virtue and Piety afford matter enough for a large Preface, if their Modeſty did not ſo awfully reſtrain my too forward inclinations, that I muſt content my ſelf to ſay, that they now live like him, whom they tenderly loved whilſt he was amongſt them; and that as he did, ſo they make it their buſineſs to do good, without letting the World know of it. It has been at their charge and preſſing deſire, that all thoſe papers that are already printed, have been copied out, prepared for the preſs, and publiſhed. They neither propoſed to themſelves, nor expect any other advantage but thy Edification, and therein the glory of God; rich returns indeed, and which nothing can rob them of, but meerly

meerly thy inproficiency, and if that happen (which God forbid) the loſs ſhall be more thine than theirs.

I was not willing that ſuch good ends ſhould be obſtructed by my declining any part of the trouble that fell to my ſhare; on the contrary I conſidered it a Duty I owed firſt to God, and then to the memory of the excellent Author, whoſe divine converſe and wonderful example, gave me early and powerful Reſolutions to dedicate my ſelf to God, and the Service of his Church.

In my performance I have done my beſt (tho ſhort of what I wiſhed) to ſerve thee; there remains in our Hands ſome brief but lively Diſcourſes upon the Epiſtle to the Epheſians, *upon the* Decalogue, *the* Creed, *and the* Lord's Prayer, *which poſſibly may be made publick in a convenient time. When this is done, I think we have ended all we intend to publiſh at preſent. Let us therefore ſet about the reformation of our Lives, in the uſe of theſe means, depending upon God for the ſucceſs; and that he by his free Grace and good Spirit, may enable thee and me, by this and all other helps, which this Age affords, to make greater and greater Advances towards Heaven, and ſo to finiſh our Courſe with Joy, is and ſhall be the hearty Prayer of,*

York, March 13*th.* 1694.

Thy Servant in the Lord,

J. FALL.

Books written by the moſt Reverend Father in God, Robert Leighton, *D. D. ſometimes Archbiſhop of* Glaſgow. *Printed for, and are to be Sold by* Sam. Keble, *at the* Great Turk's-Head *in* Fleet-ſtreet.

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R^mi. D D. Roberti Leightoni *Prælectiones Theologicæ in Auditorio publico Academiæ* Edinburgenæ (*dum Profeſſoris primarii munere ibi fungeretur*) *habitæ. Una cum* Paræneſibus *in Comitiis Academicis ad gradus Magiſtralis in artibus Candidatos; Quibus adjiciuntur Meditationes Ethico Criticæ in* Pſalmos, IV. XXXII. CXXX. 1693. 4°.

A Practical *Commentary* upon the Firſt Epiſtle General of St. *Peter*, Vol. II. containing the Third, Fourth, and Fifth Chapters, by the moſt Reverend *Robert Leighton*, D D. ſometime Archbiſhop of *Glaſgow*, 1694. 4°.

ERRATA.

PAg 16. on the margin for *nulla*, read *multa*. p. 22. l. 22. *far very*. read *very far*. p. 51. l 5. *mind* read *mud*. p. 61. l. 10. *be* read *the*. p. 81. l. 2. *re* read *reſpect*. p. 211. l. 1. *not be* read *not to be*. p. 219. l. 25. *caties* read *Calamities*. p. 243. l. 16. point it thus, *we were all ſealed to God in Baptiſm*; p. 245. l. 1. *yea*, read *ye*. p. 254. l. 20. dele *where he reigns*. p. 261. l. 31. *bear* read *bore*. p. 277. l. 10. *he* read *the* ib. penult. *it hateſt* read *hateſt it*. p. 281. l. 29. point it thus, *not to equal that, which it were ſo reaſonable*, &c. p. 262 l. 32. *their* read *the*. p. 357. l. 21. *before? you*, read *before you?* p. 416. l. 14. *of the way teaching* read *the way of teaching*. p. 441. l. 30 *ſome* read *ſoam*. p. 448. l. 15. *turn* read *turned*.

1 Ep. St. *Peter* Chap. III. Ver. 1.

Likewiſe ye Wives be in ſubjection to your own Husbands: that if any one obey not the word, they alſo without the word may be won by the Converſation of the Wives.

THE Tabernacle of the Sun (*Pſal.* 19) is ſet high in the Heavens, but 'tis, that it may have influence below upon the Earth: And the *Word of God*, that is ſpoke of there immediately after, as being many wayes like it, holds reſemblance in this particular; 'tis a ſublime heavenly Light, and yet deſcends, in its uſe, to the Lives of Men in the variety of their Stations, to warm and to enlighten, to regulate their affections and actions in whatſoever courſe of Life they are called to, by a perfect revolution or circuit, (as there is ſaid of the Sun) it viſites all Ranks and Eſtates, its going forth is from the end of Heaven, and his circuit unto the ends of it, and there is nothing hid from the heat of it, diſdains not to teach the very Servants in their low condition, and employments, how to behave themſelves, and ſets before them no meaner Example than that of *Jeſus Chriſt*, which is the higheſt of all Examples: and here the

Apoſtle proceeds to give Rules to that Relation, which is the main in Families, *Husbands* and *Wives*: for the Order it's indifferent, yet poſſibly he begins here at the *Wives*, becauſe his former Rules were to inferiours, to Subjects and Servants, and the duty he commends particularly here to them, is *Subjection*. *Likewiſe ye Wives be in Subjection*, &c.

After Men have ſaid all, and much it may be to little purpoſe, in the Parallel of theſe two Eſtates of Life, the Reſult will be found (I conceive, all being truly reckoned) to be very little odds, even in Natural Reſpects, in the thing it ſelf, ſaving only as the particular Condition of Perſons, and the Hand of Divine Providence, turns the Ballance the one way or other, and the writing of Satyrs againſt either, or Laudatives for the one in prejudice of the other, is but a *Caprice* of Man's Mind, according to their own humor: but in Reſpect of Religion, the Apoſtle, having ſcann'd the Subject to the full, leaves it indifferent, only requiring in thoſe, that are ſo ingaged, Hearts as diſingaged as may be, *that they that Marry, be as if they Married not*, &c. Within a while it will be all one, as he adds that grave reaſon *for the Faſhion* [σχῆμα] *of this World paſſeth*, 'tis but a Pageant, a Show of an hour long, [παράγει] goes by and is no more ſeen; thus the great Pomps and Solemnities of Marriages of Kings and Princes in former times, where are they? Oh! how unſeemly is it to have an immortal Soul drowned in the eſteem and affection of any thing that periſhes, and to be cold and indifferent in ſeeking after a Good that will laſt as long as it ſelf. Aſpire to that Good which is the only Match for the Soul, that cloſe Union with God, which cannot be diſſolved; which he calls an Everlaſting Marriage, that will make you happy, either with the other

other or without it. All the happineſs of the moſt excellent Perſons, and top of all Affection and Proſperity meeting in Humane Marriages, are but a dark and weak Repreſentation of the ſolid joy that is in that Myſterious Divine Union of the Spirit of Man with the *Father of Spirits* from whence it iſſues. But this by the way.

The Common Spring of all mutual Duties on both ſides is to be ſuppoſed *Love*: That peculiar conjugal Love, that makes them one, that will infuſe ſuch ſweetneſs into the Authority of the Husband and Obedience of the Wife, as will make their Lives harmonious, like the ſound of a well tun'd inſtrument; whereas without that, having ſuch an Univerſal conjuncture of intereſt in all their Affairs, they cannot eſcape frequent conteſts and diſcords, which is a ſound more unpleaſant than the jarring of untuned Strings, to an exact Ear. And this ſhould be conſidered in the choice, that it be not, as it is too often (which cauſeth ſo many Domeſtick ills) contracted only as a Bargain of outward Advantages, but as an Union of Hearts: And where this is not, and that there is ſomething wanting in this point of Affection, there, if the Parties or either of them, have any ſaving knowledge of God, and acceſs to him in Prayer, they will be earneſt Suiters for his help in this, that his Hand may right what no other can, that he who is Love it ſelf may infuſe that mutual Love into their Hearts now, which they ſhould have ſought ſooner. And certainly they that ſenſibly want this, and yet ſeek it not of him, what wonder though they find much bitterneſs and diſcontent; and where they agree only in Natural Affection, their obſervance of the Duties requir'd is not by far either ſo comfortable and pleaſing, or ſo ſure and laſting, as

when it ariſeth from a Religious and Chriſtian Love on both ſides, that will cover many failings, and take things by the beſt ſide.

Love is the prime Duty in both, the baſis of all: but becauſe the particular Character of it, as proper to the Wife, is conjugal Obedience and Subjection, therefore that is uſually ſpecified, *Eph* 5. 12. *Wives ſubmit your ſelves unto your own Husbands, as unto the Lord*: So here. Now, if it be ſuch obedience as ought to ariſe from a ſpecial kind of Love, then the Wife would remember this, that it muſt not be conſtrained, unchearful obedience, and the Husband would remember, that he ought not to require baſe and ſervile Obedience; for both theſe are contrary to that Love, whereof this obedience muſt carry the true tincture and reliſh, as flowing from it, there it will hold right, where Love commands, and Love obeys.

This Subjection as all other, is qualified thus, that it be *in the Lord*. His Authority is Primitive and binds firſt, and all other have their Patents and Priviledges from him: therefore he is ſupremely, and abſolutely to be obſerved in all, if the Husband would draw the Wife to an irreligious courſe of Life and looſeneſs, he is not to be followed in this, but in all things indifferent this obedience muſt hold; which forbids not neither, a modeſt advice and repreſentment to the Husband of that which is more convenient: but that done, a ſubmiſſive yielding to the Husbands will is the ſuiting of this rule. Yea poſſibly the Husband may not only imprudently, but unlawfully will that, which if not in its own Nature a thing unlawful, the Wife by reaſon of his will, may obey lawfully, yea could not lawfully diſobey.

Now though this Subjection was a Fundamental Law

of

of pure Nature, and came from that hand that made all things in perfect order, yet ſin, that hath imbitter'd all humane things with a Curſe, hath diſreliſht this Subjection, and made it taſte ſomewhat of a puniſhment, *Gen.* 3. 16. and that as a ſuitable puniſhment of the abuſe of that power ſhe had with him, to the drawing of him to diſobedience againſt God.

The bitterneſs in this Subjection ariſes from the corruption of Nature in both; in the Wife a perverſe deſire rather to command, or at leaſt a repining diſcontent at the obligation to obey; and this is increaſed by the diſorder, and imprudence, and harſhneſs of Husbands, in the uſe of their Authority.

But in a Chriſtian, the Conſcience of Divine appointment will carry it, and weigh down all difficulties; for the Wife conſiders her Station, that ſhe is ſet in it, ὑποταγομένη, 'tis the Rank the Lord's hand hath plac'd her in, and therefore ſhe will not break it; for reſpect and love to him, ſhe can digeſt much frowardneſs of a Husband, and make that her patient ſubjection a ſacrifice to God, *Lord I offer this to thee, and for thy ſake I humbly bear it.*

The worth and love of a Husband may cauſe that reſpect, where this Rule moves not: but the Chriſtian Wife that hath love to God, tho her Husband be not ſo comely, nor ſo wiſe, nor any way ſo amiable, as many others; yet becauſe her *own Husband*, and becauſe of the Lord's command in the general, and his Providence in the particular diſpoſe of his own, therefore ſhe loves and obeys.

That if any obey not the Word.] This ſuppoſes a particular Caſe, and applies the Rule to it, takes it for granted a believing Wife will chearfully obſerve and reſpect a believing Husband; but if an Unbeliever, yet that un-

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ties not this engagement, yea there is ſomething in it preſſes it and binds it the more, a ſingular good that probably may follow upon obeying ſuch; by that good Converſation, they may be gained that believe not the Word, not that they could be fully converted without the Word, but having a prejudice againſt the Word, that may be remov'd by the carriage of a believing Wife, and they may be ſomewhat mollified, and prepar'd, and induc'd to hearken to Religion, and take it into conſideration.

This gives not Chriſtians warrant to draw on this Task, and make themſelves this Work, by chuſing to be joyned to an Unbeliever, either a prophane or meer natural Husband or Wife; but teaches them being ſo matched, what ſhould be their great deſire, and their ſuitable carriage to the attainment of it. And in the primitive Chriſtian times, this fell out often, that by the Goſpel preached, the Husband might be converted from groſs Infidelity, Judaiſm, or Paganiſm, and not the Wife, or the Wife which is the ſuppoſition here, and not the Husband, and there came in the uſe of this conſideration.

And in this is the freedom of Divine Grace, to pick and chuſe where he will, one of a Family, or two of a Tribe, as the Prophet hath it, and according to our Saviour's word, *two in one Bed, the one taken and the other left.* Some ſelected Ones in a Congregation, and in a Houſe, a Child poſſibly, or Servant, or Wife, and leave the reſt. The Apoſtle ſeems to imply particularly, that there were many inſtances of this, Wives Converts, and Husbands unbelieving. We can determine nothing of their conjecture, that think there ſhall be more of that Sex, here call'd the weaker Veſſel, than of the other, that ſhall be Veſſels of honour, which

which God ſeaſons with Grace here, and hereafter will fill with Glory; but this is clear, that many of them are converted, while many Men, and divers of them very wiſe and learned Men, having the ſame and far greater means and opportunities, do periſh in unbelief. This, I ſay, evidences the Liberty, and the Power of the Spirit of God, that *Wind, that bloweth where it liſteth*; and withal it ſuits with that word of the Apoſtle, that the Lord this way abaſes theſe things that men account ſo much of, *and hath choſen the weak things of the World to confound the mighty*, &c. Nor doth the pliableneſs, and tenderneſs of their affections (tho Grace once wrought may make good uſe of that) make their converſion the eaſier, but the harder rather; for through Natures corruption, they would by that yield more to evil than to good; but the efficacy of Grace appears much in eſtabliſhing their hearts in the love of God, and making them once poſſeſs'd with that, to be inflexible, and invincible by the tentations of the World, and the ſtrength, and ſlights of Satan.

That which is here ſaid of their Converſation, holds of the Husband in the like caſe, and of Friends and Kindred, and generally of all Chriſtians, in reference to them with whom they converſe, that their ſpotleſs holy carriage as Chriſtians, and in their particular ſtations, as Chriſtian Husbands, or Wives, or Friends, is a very likely and hopeful means of converting others, that believe not. Men that are prejudic'd obſerve actions a great deal more than words. In thoſe firſt times eſpecially, the blameleſs carriage of Chriſtians, did much to the increaſing of their number.

Strive ye Wives, and others, to adorn and commend the Religion you profeſs to others, eſpecially thoſe neareſt you that are averſe. Give no juſt cauſe of

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ſcandal and prejudice againſt Religion, beware not only of groſs failings and ways of ſin, but of ſuch imprudencies as may expoſe you, and your Profeſſion, ſtudy both holy and wiſe carriage, and pray much for it, *Jam.* 1. 5. *If any of you lack Wiſdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it ſhall be given him.*

But if Wives, and other private Chriſtians, be thus oblig'd, how much more the Miniſters of the Word? Oh! that we could remember our deep engagement to Holineſs of life; he ſaid right, *either teach none, or let your life teach too. Cohelleth, anima concionatrix,* muſt the Preacher be: the Word of Life ſpringing from inward Affection, and then *Vita concionatrix.* The *Sundays* Sermon laſts but an hour or two, but holineſs of Life is a continued Sermon all the Week long.

Naz.

Eccleſ. 1. v. 1.

They alſo without the Words may be won.] The Converſion of a Soul is an ineſtimable gain, 'tis a high trading and deſign to go about it. Oh! the precious Soul, but diſvalu'd by moſt: Will we believe him that knew well the price of it, for he paid it, that the whole viſible World is not worth one Soul, the gaining it all cannot countervail that loſs? This Wives, and Husbands, and Parents, and Friends, if themſelves converted, would conſider ſeriouſly, and apply themſelves to pray much that their unconverted Relations, in nature dead, may be enliven'd, and they may receive them from death; and eſteem of nothing, reſt in no natural content, nor gain without that, at leaſt uſing unceſſant diligence in ſeeking it, and their utmoſt skill, and pains in it; but above all, this is the peculiar task of Miniſters, as the Apoſtle often repeats it of himſelf, 1 *Cor.* 9. all gains on earth baſe for this, a Soul converted

verted is gained to it ſelf, gained to the Paſtor, or Friend, or Wife, or Husband that ſought it, and gained to Jeſus Chriſt, added to his Treaſury, who thought not his own precious Blood too dear to lay out for this Gain.

Me male amando me perdidi, & te ſolum quærendo & pure amando me & te pariter inveni, à Kemp.

Verſe 2.

While they behold your chaſt Converſation coupled with fear.

AS all Graces are connexed in their own Nature, ſo 'tis altogether neceſſary, that they be found ſo, for the end here propounded, the converſion of thoſe that are ſtrangers to Religion, and poſſeſt with falſe notions of it, and prejudices againſt it. 'Tis not the regularneſs of ſome particular actions, nor the obſervance of ſome duties, that will ſerve: but it is an even uniform frame of Life, that the Apoſtle here teaches Chriſtian Wives, particularly in reference to this end, the gaining, or converſion of unbelieving Husbands, and this we have both in that word, *their converſation*, which ſignifies the whole courſe and tract of their Lives, and in the particular ſpecifying of the ſeveral duties, proper to that relation and ſtate of Life. *Firſt*, Subjection. *Secondly*, Chaſtity. *Thirdly*, Fear. *Fourthly*, Modeſty in outward Ornaments. *Fifthly*, The inward Ornaments of Meekneſs and Quietneſs of Spirit.

The combinement of thoſe things makes up ſuch a Wife, and the exerciſe of them throughout her life,

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makes up ſuch a Converſation, as adorns and commends the Religion they profeſs, and is a fit, and may be a ſucceſsful means of converting the Husband, that as yet profeſſes it not.

Chaſte Converſation.] It is the proper character of a Chriſtian to ſtudy Purity in all things, as the word in its extent ſignifies. Let the World turn that to a reproach, call them as you will, this is ſure, that none have leſs fancy and preſumption of Purity, than theſe that have moſt deſire of it; but the particular pureneſs here intended, is, as 'tis render'd, that of Chaſtity, as the word is oft taken, it being a Grace that peculiarly deſerves that name, as the ſins contrary to it are uſually and deſervedly called Uncleanneſs. 'Tis the pure whiteneſs of the Soul to be chaſte, to abhor and diſdain the ſwiniſh puddle of Luſt, than which there is nothing doth more debaſe the excellent Soul, draws it down below it ſelf, and makes it truely brutiſh. The three kinds of Chaſtity, Virginal, Conjugal, and Vidual, are all of them acceptable to God, and ſutable to the Profeſſion of a Chriſtian: therefore in general only, whatſoever be our condition of Life, let us in that way conform to it, follow the Apoſtles Rule, poſſeſſing thoſe our earthen Veſſels, our bodies, in Holineſs and Honour; by which there is expreſs'd this ſame Chaſtity. And this we ſhall do, if we rightly remember our Calling, as Chriſtians, in what ſort of life ſoever; as there he tells us, *That God hath not called us to Uncleanneſs, but unto Holineſs.*

With Fear.] Either a reverent reſpect to their Husbands, or the fear of God, whence flows beſt, both that and all other obſervance, whether of Conjugal or any other Chriſtian Duties; be not preſumptuous, (as ſome) becauſe you are chaſte, but contemper your Converſation

ſation that way with a religious fear of God, that you dare not take liberty to offend him in any other thing; and according to his inſtitution, with a reverent fear of your Husbands, ſhunning to offend them: but poſſibly this fear doth particularly relate to this other duty with which its joyn'd *chaſte Converſation with fear*, fearing the leaſt ſtain of Chaſtity, or the very leaſt appearance of any thing not ſuiting with it: 'tis a delicate timerous Grace, affraid of the leaſt air, or ſhadow of any thing, that hath but a reſemblance of wronging it, in carriage, or ſpeech, or apparel, as follows,

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Verſes 3, 4.

3. *Whoſe adorning, let it not be that outward adorning, of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of Gold, or of putting on of apparel:*
4. *But let it be the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet ſpirit, which is in the ſight of God of great price.*

THat nothing may be wanting to the qualifying of a Chriſtian Wife, ſhe is taught how to dreſs her ſelf, ſuppoſing a general deſire, but eſpecially in that Sex, of Ornament and Comelineſs; the Sex, that began firſt our engagement to the neceſſity of cloathing, having ſtill a peculiar propenſion to be curious in that, and to improve the neceſſity to an advantage.

The direction here given corrects the misplacing of this diligence, and addresses it right, i. e. *Let it not be of the outward Man in plaiting*, &c.

Our perverse crooked hearts turn all we use into disorder; these two necessities of our Life, *Food* and *Rayment*, how few know the right measure and bounds of them, unless Poverty be our Carver and cut us short, who almost is there, that is not bent to something excessive; far more are beholding to the lowliness of their estate, than to the lowliness of their mind, for sobriety in those things; and yet some will not be so bounded neither, but will profusely lavish out upon Trifles, to the sensible prejudice of their Estate.

'Tis not my purpose, nor do I think it very needful to debate many particulars of Apparel and Ornament of the Body, their lawfulness or unlawfulness: only,

First, 'Tis out of doubt, that though cloathing was first drawn on by necessity, yet all regard of Comeliness and Ornament in Apparel is not unlawful, nor doth the Apostle's expression here rightly considered, fasten that upon the adorning he here speaks of, and he doth no more universally condemn the use of Gold for Ornament, than he doth any other comely Rayment, which here he means by that general Word of putting on of Apparel, for his (*not*) is comparative; *not this Adorning, but the Ornament of a meek Spirit*, that rather, and as much more comely and precious; as that, *I will have mercy and not sacrifice.*

Secondly, According to the different place, and quality of Persons there may be difference in this: Thus the Robes of Judges and Princes are not only for personal Ornament, but because there is in them, especially to vulgar eyes, that seldom look deeper than the out-

outside of things, there is, I say, in that Apparel a representment of Authority or Majesty, that befits their place; and besides this, in other Persons that are not in Publick Place, Men or Women, that are here particularly directed, yet may have in this some mark of their Rank, and in Persons otherways little distant, some allowance may be made for the Habitudes and Breeding of some beyond others, or the quality of their Society, and those with whom they converse.

Thirdly, 'Tis not impossible that there may be in some an affected Pride in the meaness of Apparel, and in others, under either neat or rich attire a very humble unaffected mind, using it upon some of the aforemention'd engagements, or such like, and yet the heart not at all upon it.

Magnus quì fictilibus utitur tanquam argentis, nec ille minor quì argento tanquam fictilibus. Sen.

Fourthly, 'Tis as sure as any of these, that real excess and vanity in Apparel will creep in, and will always willingly convey it self under the cloak of some of these honest and lawful Considerations. This is a prime peice of our hearts deceit, not only to hold out fair Pretences to others, but to put the trick upon our selves, to make our selves believe we are right, and single minded, in those things wherein we are directly serving our Lusts and feeding our own Vanity.

Fifthly, To a sincere and humble Christian very little, either dispute, or discourse in this will be needful; a tender Conscience, and a Heart purg'd from Vanity, and weaned from the World, will be sure to regulate this, and all other things of this nature, after the safest manner, and will be wary,

1. Of Lightness and fantastick garb in Apparel, which is the very Bush or Sign hanging out, that tells a vain Mind lodges within. 2. Of excessive costliness, which both argues, and feeds the Pride of the

Heart,

Heart, and defrauds, if not others of their dues, yet the poor of thy charity, which in God's ſight, is a due debt too, and far more comfort ſhall thou have on thy death Bed, to remember ſuch a time, in ſtead of Lace on my own Cloaths, I helped a naked back to cloathing, I abated ſomewhat of my former ſuperfluities, to ſupply the Poors neceſſities, ſweeter this, than to remember, that I could needleſly caſt out many pounds to ſerve my Pride, rather than give a penny to relieve the Poor.

As conſcientious Chriſtians will not exceed in the thing it ſelf, ſo in as far as they uſe lawful Ornament and Comelineſs, they will do it without beſtowing much, either diligence or delight on the buſineſs.

To have the mind taken and pleas'd with ſuch things, is ſo fooliſh and childiſh a thing, that if moſt might not find it in themſelves, they would wonder at many others, of years and common wit. And yet truely, 'tis a Diſeaſe that few eſcape, 'tis ſtrange upon how poor things Men and Women will be vain, and think themſelves ſome body; not only upon ſome comelineſs in their face or feature, which though poor, yet is a part of themſelves, but of things meerly without them, that they are well lodged, or well mounted, or well apparell'd, either richly, or well in faſhion, light empty minds, as bladders blown up with any thing, and they that perceive not this in themſelves, are moſt drown'd; but ſuch as have found it out, and abhor their own follies, are ſtill hunting and following themſelves in theſe, to beat them out of their hearts, and to ſhame them from ſuch fopperies. The Soul fallen from God hath loſt its true worth and beauty, and therefore it baſely deſcends to theſe mean things to ſerve and dreſs the body, and take ſhare with it of its unworthy

Non bis pueri ſed ſemper.

unworthy borrow'd Ornaments, hath loſt and forgotten God, and ſeeks not after him, knows not that he is the alone Beauty, and Ornament of the Soul, *Jer.* 2. 32. his Spirit, and the Graces of it, its rich attire, as here particularly ſpecified in one excellent Grace, and holds true in the reſt.

The Apoſtle doth indeed expreſly on purpoſe check and forbid vanity and exceſs in apparel, and exceſſive delight in lawful decorum, but his prime end is to recommend this other Ornament of the Soul, *The hidden man of the heart.*

'Tis the thing the beſt Philoſophy aim'd at, as ſome of their choice men do expreſs it, to reduce men, as much as may be, from their Body to their Soul, but this is the thing that true Religion alone doth effectually and throughly, from the pampering and feeding of a Morſel for the Worms to the nouriſhing of that immortal being infus'd into't, and directs it to the proper nouriſhment of Souls, the Bread that came down from Heaven, *Jo.* 6. 27.

So here the Apoſtle, pulls off from Chriſtian Women their vain outſide Ornaments: but is not this a wrong to ſpoil all their dreſſing and fineneſs? No, he doth but this, to ſend them to a better Wardrobe: there's much profit in the change.

All the Gold and other riches of the Temple, figuring the Excellent Graces of Chriſtians; of Chriſt indeed firſt, as having all fullneſs in himſelf, and furniſhing them: but ſecondarily of Chriſtians, as the living Temples of God, ſo the Church all glorious, but within: and the embroidery, the variety of Graces, the lively colours of other Graces ſhining beſt on the dark ground of Humility. Chriſt delights to give much Ornament to his Church, commends what ſhe hath, and adds more, *Cant.* 1. 10, 11.

The

The particular Grace he recommends is particularly ſuitable to his ſubject in hand, the conjugal duty of Wives, nothing ſo decoring their whole carriage as this meekneſs and quietneſs of Spirit, but it is withal the comelineſs of every Chriſtian in every eſtate, 'tis not a Womans Garment or Ornament improper for Men, there is ſomewhat (as I may ſay) of a particular cut or faſhion of it for Wives towards their Husbands, and in their domeſtick Affairs, but Men, all Men ought to wear of the ſame ſtuff, yea ſo to ſpeak of the ſame piece, for it is in all one and the ſame Spirit, fits the ſtouteſt and greateſt Commanders. *Moſes* a great General, and yet no leſs great in this Virtue, *the meekeſt Man on Earth.*

Nothing more uncomely in a Wife than an uncompoſed, turbulent Spirit, that is put out of frame with every trifle, and inventive of falſe cauſes of diſquietneſs and fretting to it ſelf. And ſo of a Husband, and of all, an unquiet paſſionate Mind lays it ſelf naked, and diſcovers its own deformity to all. The greateſt part of things that vex us, are not from their Nature or weight, but the unſettledneſs of our Minds. How comely is it to ſee a compoſed firm Mind and Carriage that is not lightly moved.

Nulla nos offendunt quæ non ledunt.

I urge not a Stoical ſtupidneſs: but that in things that deſerve ſharp reproof, the Mind keep in its own Station and Seat ſtill, not ſhaken out of it ſelf, as the moſt are; that the Tongue utter not unſeemly raſh words, nor the Hand act any thing that diſcovers the mind hath loſt its command for the time; but truly the moſt know ſo ill how to uſe juſt anger, upon juſt cauſe, that it is eaſier, and the ſafer extream, not to be angry, but ſtill calm and ſerene, as the upper Region, not the place of continual tempeſt, and ſtorms, as the moſt are:

Let

let it paſs for a kind of ſheepiſhneſs to be meek, 'tis a likeneſs to him that *was a Sheep before the ſhearers not opening his Mouth*, 'tis a Portion of his Spirit.

The Apoſtle commends his exchange of Ornaments from two things. 1. Incorruptible, and therefore fits an incorruptible Soul. Your varieties of Jewels and Rich Apparel are periſhing things, you ſhall one day ſee an heap made of all, and that all on a flame; and in reference to you, they periſh ſooner, when death ſtrips you of your neareſt Garment, your fleſh, all the other that were but looſe upper Garments above it, muſt off too, it gets indeed a covering to the Grave, but the Soul is left ſtark naked, if no other Cloathing be provided for it, for the Body was but borrowed; then it is denuded of all. But ſpiritual Ornaments, and this here amongſt them, remain, and are incorruptible, they neither wear out, nor out of faſhion, but are ſtill the better for the wearing, and ſhall laſt Eternity, and ſhine there in full luſtre.

And *2dly*, becauſe the opinion of others is much regarded in matter of Apparel, and 'tis moſt for that we uſe Ornament in it, he tells us of the account of this, Men think it poor and mean, nothing more expos'd to contempt than the Spirit of Meekneſs, mere folly with Men, that's no matter, this overweighs all their diſeſteem, *'tis with God of great price*, and things are indeed as he values them, and no otherways. Tho' it be not the Country faſhion yet it is the faſhion at Court, yea 'tis the Kings own faſhion, *Matth.* 11.29. *Learn of me for I am meek and lowly*, &c. Some that are Court-bred will ſend for the Maſters of faſhions tho' they live not in the Court; and tho' the Peaſants think them ſtrange dreſſes, yet they regard not that, but uſe them as fineſt and beſt:

Care not what the World ſay. You are not to ſtay long with them, deſire to have both faſhions and ſtuff from Court, from Heaven, this Spirit of meekneſs, and it ſhall be ſent you, 'tis never right in any thing with us till we attain to this, to tread on the opinion of Men, and eye nothing but Gods approbation.

Verſes 5, 6.

5. *For after this manner in the old time, the holy Women alſo who truſted in God adorned themſelves.*
6. *Even as* Sarah *obeyed* Abraham, *calling him Lord: whoſe Daughters ye are as long as ye do well, and are not afraid with any amazement.*

THe Apoſtle inforces his Doctrine by Example. The moſt compendious way of teaching. Hence the right way to uſe the Scriptures is to regulate our manners by them, as by their precepts ſo by examples. And for this end it is that a great part of it is hiſtorical. There is not in the Saints a tranſmigration of Souls, but there is, ſo to ſpeak, an oneneſs of Souls, being in all Ages partakers of the ſelf ſame Spirit, hence the Daughters of *Sarah* are called pious and obedient Wives. Women here deſigned, 1. Holy. 2. Believing. 3. Firm and reſolute, *not afraid with any Amazement.* tho' by nature they are fearful, yet rendred of undaunted Spirits by a holy, clean, and pure conſcience. Believing Wives, and fearers of God are not terrify'd, their Minds are eſtabliſhed in a due obedience to God and alſo toward their Husbands.

Verſe

Verſe 7.

7. Likewiſe ye Husbands, dwell with them according to knowledge giving honour unto the Wife, as unto the weaker Veſſel, and as being heirs together of the Grace of Life, that your Prayers be not hindred.

YOur Wives are ſubject to you, but you likewiſe ſubject to this Word, by which all ought in all Stations to be directed, and however all ſhall one day be judged by it, and alike ſubject as they [ὁμοίως] Parents as Children, Maſters as Servants, and Kings as their Subjects; all hold of a ſuperiour, and 'tis high treaſon againſt the Majeſty of God, for any in any place of command, to dream of any unbounded abſolute authority, in oppoſition to him.

A Spirit of prudence or knowledge particularly ſuitable and relating to this ſubject is required, as the light and rule, by which his whole œconomy and carriage is to be guided. It is requir'd that he endeavour after that civil prudence, for the ordering of his Affairs, that tends to the good of his Family, but chiefly a pious religious prudence, for regulating his Mind and carriage as a Chriſtian Husband; that he ſtudy the Rule of Scripture in this particular, which many do not; neither adviſing with it, what they ſhould do, nor laying it by reflex upon their actions paſt, examining by it what they have done. Now this is the great fault in all practical things, moſt know ſomething of them, but inadvertency and inconſideration, not ordering our ways by that light, is the thing that ſpoils all.

Knowledge required in the Wife, but more eminently in the Husband, as the Head, the proper ſeat of knowledge. It is poſſible, that the Wife may ſometimes have the advantage of knowledge, either natural wit and judgment, or a great meaſure of underſtanding of ſpiritual things, but this ſtill holds, that the Husband is bound to improve the meaſure both of natural and of ſpiritual gifts, that he hath, or can attain to, and apply them uſefully to the ordering of his conjugal carriage, and that he underſtand himſelf oblig'd ſomwhat the more in the very notion of a Husband, both to ſeek after, and to uſe that prudence, that is peculiarly requir'd for his due deportment; and a Chriſtian Wife that's largelier endow'd, yet will ſhew all reſpectiveneſs to the meaſure of Wiſdom, though it be leſs, that is beſtow'd upon her Husband.

Dwell with them] This indeed implies and ſuppoſes their abiding with them, ſo far as their calling and lawful Affairs permit: but I conceive, that which it expreſly means, is all the converſation and duties of that eſtate, that they ſo behave themſelves in dwelling with them, as becomes Men of Knowledge, wiſe and prudent Husbands, which returns them uſually the gain of that full reverence and reſpect that is due to them, of which they rob and diveſt themſelves that be either of a fooliſh or trifling carriage, or of too auſtere and rigid a converſation.

Giving honour unto the Wife] This, I conceive, is not as ſome take it, convenient maintenance, tho' that's a requiſite duty too, and may be taken in under this word; but it ſeems to be chiefly, a due conjugal eſteem of them, and reſpect to them, the Husband not vilifying, and deſpiſing them, which will readily grieve and exaſperate them, not diſcloſing the weakneſſes of the

the Wife to others, nor obſerving them too narrowly himſelf: but hiding them both from others, and his own eyes by love, not ſeeing them further than love it ſelf requires, that is to the wiſe rectifying of them by milde advices, and admonitions, that flow from love. And to this, the reaſons indeed ſute well: it ſeems at firſt a little incongruous, *honour*, becauſe *weaker*; but conſidering this kind of honour, not of reverence as Superiour, for that is their part, but ſuch an eſteem and reſpect, without which indeed love cannot conſiſt, for we cannot love that which we do not in ſome good meaſure eſteem well of. And that they be not contemn'd and ſlighted, even becauſe weaker, for of all injuries contempt is one of the ſmartingeſt, and moſt ſenſible, eſpecially to weakeſt Perſons, who feel moſt exactly the leaſt touches of this, whereas greater Spirits are a little harder againſt opinion, and more indifferent for it, and tho' not all, yet ſome Wives may be of a ſtronger Mind and Judgment than the Husbands, yet thoſe rules reſpect the general condition of the Sexes, and ſpeak of it ſo, as ordinarily weaker.

Omne infirmum naturâ querelum.

Again, Love which is ever to be ſuppoſed one Article and the main one, for nothing indeed can be right where that ſuppoſition proves falſe; Love, I ſay, ſuppoſed, this reaſon is very enforcing, that the weaker the Veſſels be, the more tenderly they ſhould be uſed, and the more a prudent paſſing by of frailties is needful, there love will ſtudy it, and beſtow it the more; yea, this tie you know makes two one, and that which is a part of our ſelves, the more it needs in that, the more comelineſs we put upon it, as the Apoſtle St. *Paul* tells us; and this further may be conſider'd, that there is a mutual need of this honouring that conſiſts in not deſpiſing and in covering of frailties, as is even imply'd

ply'd in this, that the Woman is not called ſimply weak, but the weaker; and the Husband, that is generally by Natures advantage, or ſhould be the ſtronger yet is weak too, for both are Veſſels of Earth, and therefore frail, both polluted with ſin, and therefore ſubject to a multitude of ſinful ſollies and frailties: but as that particular frailty of nature pleads for Women that honour, ſo the other reaſon added, is not from particular diſadvantage, but from their common priviledge, and advantage of grace, as Chriſtian, that the Chriſtian Husband and Wife are equally Co-heirs of the ſame grace of life.

As being Heirs together of the grace of life.] This is that which moſt ſtrongly binds on all theſe duties, on the hearts of Husbands and Wives. And moſt ſtrongly indeed binds their hearts together, and makes them one, if each be reconciled unto God in Chriſt, and ſo heirs of life, and one with God, then are they truly one in God, each with other, and that's the ſureſt and ſweeteſt union that can be. Natural love hath riſen very high in ſome Husbands, and Wives: but the higheſt of it falls far very ſhort of that which holds in God, hearts concentring in him are moſt, and excellently one, that love which is cemented by youth, and beauty, when theſe moulder and decay, as ſoon they do, it fades too, that is ſomewhat purer, and ſo more laſting that holds in a natural or moral harmony of Minds, yet theſe likewiſe may alter and change by ſome great accident: but the moſt refin'd, and ſpiritual, and moſt indiſſoluble, is that which is knit with the higheſt and pureſt Spirit. And the ignorance or diſregard of this, is the great cauſe of ſo much bitterneſs, or ſo little true ſweetneſs in the life of moſt married Perſons, becauſe God is left out, they meet not as one in him.

Heirs

Heirs together.] Loath will they be to deſpiſe one another, that are both bought with the precious blood of one Redeemer, and loath to grieve one another, being in him brought into peace with God, they will entertain true peace betwixt themſelves and not ſuffer any thing to diſturb it. They have hopes to meet one day, where is nothing but perfect Concord and Peace, they will live as heirs of that life here, and make their preſent eſtate as like to Heaven as they can, and ſo a pledge and evidence of their title to that Inheritance of peace, that is there laid up for them, and they will not fail to put one another often in Mind of thoſe hopes, and that Inheritance, and to advance and further both each other towards it: where this is not, 'tis to little purpoſe to ſpeak of other rules; where neither party aſpires to this heirſhip, live otherways as they will, there is one common Inheritance abiding them, one Inheritance of everlaſting flames, and as they do increaſe the ſin and guiltineſs of one another by their irreligious Converſation, ſo that which ſome of them do wickedly here, upon no great cauſe, they ſhall have full cauſe there, to curſe the time of their coming together, and that ſhall be a peice of their exerciſe for ever; but happy thoſe perſons, in any Society of Marriage, or Friendſhip that converſe ſo together, as thoſe that ſhall live eternally together in glory. This indeed is the Sum of all duties.

Life] A ſweet word but ſweeteſt of all in this ſenſe, that Life above indeed only worthy the name, and this we have here, in compariſon, let it not be called life, but continual dying, an inceſſant journey towards the Grave, if you reckon years, but a ſhort moment to him that attains the fulleſt old age: but reckon miſeries and ſorrows 'tis long to him that dyes young.

Oh

Oh! that that only bleſſed life were more known, and then it would be more deſir'd.

Grace.] This the tenor of this Heirſhip, Free Grace, this Life a free Gift, *Rom. 6. ult.* No life ſo ſpotleſs either in marriage or virginity, as to lay claim to this life upon other terms; if we conſider but a little, what it is, and what we are, this will be quickly out of queſtion with us, and we will be moſt gladly content to hold it thus by deed or gift, and admire and extol that Grace that beſtows it.

That your Prayers be not hindred] He ſuppoſes in Chriſtians the neceſſary and frequent uſe of this, takes it for granted, that the Heir of Life cannot live without prayer, this is the proper breathing and language of theſe Heirs, none of them dumb, they can all ſpeak, theſe Heirs if they be alone, they pray alone, if Heirs together, and living together, they pray together. Can the Husband and Wife have that love, and wiſdom, and meekneſs that may make their life happy, and that bleſſing that may make their Affairs ſucceſsful, while they neglect God the only giver of theſe and all good things? You think theſe needleſs motives, but you cannot think how it would ſweeten your Converſe if it were uſed. 'Tis prayer that ſanctifies, and ſeaſons, and bleſſes all, and not enough that they pray when with the Family; but even Husband and Wife together by themſelves, and with their Children, that they, eſpecially the Mother, as being moſt with them in their Child-hood, when they begin to be capable, may draw them apart, and offer them to God, often praying with them, and inſtructing them in their youth, for they are pliable while young, as glaſs when hot, but after ſooner break than bend.

But above all, Prayer is neceſſary as they are Heirs of

of Heaven, often ſending up their deſires thither. You that are not much in prayer, look as if you look'd for no more than what you have here, if you had an Inheritance and Treaſure above, would not your heart delight to be there? Thus the Heart of a Chriſtian is in the conſtant frame of it, but after a ſpecial manner Prayer raiſes the Soul above the World and ſets it in Heaven: 'tis its near acceſs unto God, and dealing with him eſpecially about thoſe Affairs that concern that Inheritance. Now in this lies a great part of the comfort a Chriſtian can have here, and the Apoſtle knew this, that he would gain any thing at their hands, that he preſs'd by this Argument, that otherwiſe they would be hinder'd in their prayers. He knew that they who are acquainted with prayer find ſuch unſpeakable ſweetneſs in it, that they will rather do any thing than be prejudic'd in that.

Now the breach of conjugal Love, the jarrs and contentions of Husband and Wife, do out of doubt ſo leaven and imbitter their Spirits, that they are exceeding unfit for Prayer, which is the ſweet Harmony of the Soul in God's ears, and when the Soul is ſo far out of tune as thoſe diſtempers make it, he cannot but perceive it, whoſe ear is the moſt exact of all, for he made and tun'd the Ear, and is the Fountain of Harmony: it cuts the ſinews and ſtrength of Prayer, makes breaches and gaps, as wounds, at which the ſpirits fly out, as the cutting of a vein, by which, as they ſpeak, it bleeds to death. When the Soul is calm and compos'd, it may behold the Face of God ſhining on it; and they that pray together, ſhould not only have hearts in tune within themſelves in their own frame, but tun'd together, eſpecially Husband and Wife that are one, they ſhould have hearts conſorted and ſweetly tun'd to each

other for prayer. So the word is ἐὰν συμφωνήσωσιν, *Matt.* 18. 19.

And 'tis generally true that all unwary walking in a Chriſtian, wrongs their communion with Heaven, and caſts a damp upon their Prayers, clogs the Wings of it: theſe two mutually help one another, *Prayer* and *holy Converſation*; the more exactly we walk, the more fit for prayer, and the more we pray, the more enabled to walk exactly, and 'tis a happy life to find the correſpondence of theſe two, *calling on the Lord* and *departing from iniquity* Therefore that you may pray much live holily, and that you may live holily be much in prayer, ſurely ſuch are the heirs of Glory, and this is their way to it.

Verſe 8.

Finally, be ye all of one mind, having compaſſion one of another, love as brethren, be pitiful, be courteous.

HEre the particular Rules, the Apoſtle gives to ſeveral Relations, fall in again to the main current of his general Exhortation, that concerns all us Chriſtians. The return of his diſcourſe to this univerſality is expreſs'd in that, *finally*, and the univerſality of theſe duties, [*all*]. 'Tis neither poſſible nor convenient to deſcend to every particular, but there is ſuppos'd in a Chriſtian, an ingenuous and prudent ſpirit, to adapt thoſe general Rules to their particular Actions and Converſation, ſquaring by them before hand, and examining by them after, and yet herein the moſt fail: hear theſe as general diſcourſes, and let them paſs ſo, apply them not

not, or if they do, 'tis readily to ſome other: but they are addreſs'd to all, that each one may regulate himſelf by them, and ſo theſe Divine Truths, as a well drawn Picture, looks particularly upon every one amongſt the great Multitude, that look upon it. And this one Verſe hath a cluſter of five Chriſtian Graces or Vertues. That which is in the middle as the ſtalk or root of the reſt, *Love*, and the other growing out of it, two on each ſide, *Unanimity* and *Sympathy* on the one, and *Pity* and *Courteſie*, on the other; but we ſhall take them as they lie.

Of one mind.] This doth not only mean Union in Judgment, but it extends likewiſe to Affection and Action, eſpecially in ſo far as they relate to, and depend upon the other. And ſo, I conceive, it comprehends in its full latitude, an harmony and agreement of minds and affections, and carriage in Chriſtians; as making up one body, and a ſerious ſtudy of preſerving and increaſing that agreement in all things; but eſpecially in ſpiritual things, in which their Communion doth primely conſiſt. And becauſe in this, the conſent of their Judgments in matters of Religion is a prime point; therefore we will conſider that a little moreparticularly.

And *Firſt*, What it is not.

1. 'Tis not a careleſs indifferency concerning thoſe things, not to be troubled about them at all, nor to make any judgment concerning them; this is not a loving agreement ariſing from oneneſs of ſpirit, but a dead ſtupidity arguing a total ſpiritleſsneſs, as the agreement of a number of dead bodies together, which indeed do not ſtrive and conteſt, that is, they move not at all, and that is they live not: So that concor'd in things of Religion, that is a not conſidering them, nor acting of the mind about them, is either the

fruit and ſign of groſs ignorance, or irreligion, they that are wholly ignorant of ſpiritual things, are content you determine, and impoſe upon them what you will, as in the dark there is no difference nor choice of colours, they are all one: But, 2. which is worſe, in ſome this peaceableneſs about Religion, is from an univerſal unbelief and inaffection, and that ſometimes comes of the much ſearch and knowledge of debates and controverſies in Religion, men having ſo many diſputes about Religion in their Heads, and no Life of Religion in their Hearts, fall into a conceit that all is but juggling, and the eaſieſt is, to believe nothing, and theſe agree with any, or rather with none; ſometimes 'tis from a prophane ſupercilious diſdain of all theſe things, and many there be of theſe of *Gallio*'s temper, that *care for none of theſe things*, and that account all Queſtions in Religion, as he did, but matter of Words and Names. And by this all Religions may agree together: but it were not a natural Union by the active heat of the Spirit, but a confuſion rather, by the want of it, not a knitting together, but a freezing together as cold congregates all how heterogeneous ſoever, Sticks, and Stones, and Water: but heat makes firſt a ſeparation of different things, and then unites thoſe that are of the ſame Nature.

And to one of theſe two is reducible much of the common quietneſs of Peoples Minds about Religion, all that implicite Romiſh agreement that they boaſt of, what is it, but a brutiſh ignorance of ſpiritual things, authoriz'd and recommended for that very purpoſe; and amongſt the learned of them, as many idle differences and diſputes as among any. 'Tis an eaſie way indeed to agree, if all will put out their eyes, and follow the blind guiding of their Judge of controverſies, this

this is, that πάνσοφον φάρμακον, their great device for Peace, to let the Pope determine all. If all will reſolve to be cozen'd by him, he will agree them all, as if the Conſciences of Men ſhould only find Peace by being led by the noſe at one man's pleaſure, a way the Apoſtle *Paul* clearly renounces, 2 *Cor.* 1. 24. *Not for that we have Dominion over your Faith, but are helpers of your joy, for by Faith ye ſtand.*

And though we have eſcaped this, yet much of our common union of minds, I fear, is from no other, than the aforementioned cauſes, want of knowledge, and want of affection to Religion. You that boaſt you live conformably to the Appointments of the Church, and none hears of your noiſe, we may thank the ignorance of your minds for that kind of quietneſs, but this requir'd unanimity is another thing, and before I unfold it, I ſhall premiſe this; That although it be very difficult, and it may be impoſſible to determine, what things are alone fundamental in Religion, under the notion of difference, intended by that word, yet it is undoubted, that there be ſome Truths more abſolutely neceſſary, and therefore accordingly more clearly revealed, than ſome others, there are, μεγαλα τῦ νόμυ *great things of the Law*, and ſo of the Goſpel. And though no part of Divine Truth once fully clear'd, ought to be ſlighted; yet there are things that may be true, and yet are but of leſs importance, and of leſs evidence than others. And that this difference is wiſely to be conſider'd by Chriſtians, for the intereſt of this agreement of Minds here recommended, and concerning it we may ſafely conclude,

1. That Chriſtians ought to have a clear, and unanimous belief of the myſteries and principles of Faith, to agree in thoſe without controverſie. 2. They ought

to

to be diligent in the reſearch of Truth in all things that concern Faith and Religion : and withal to uſe all due means for the fulleſt conſent and agreement in them all, that poſſibly can be attained. 3. Perfect and univerſal conſent in all, after all induſtry beſtow'd on't, for any thing we know, is not here attainable, neither betwixt all Churches, nor all Perſons in one and the ſame Church. And therefore though Church Meetings and Synods, as the fitteſt and effectualleſt way to this Unity, ſhould endeavour to bring the Church to the fulleſt agreement that may be, yet they ſhould beware, leaſt the ſtraining it too high in all things, rather break it, and an over diligence in appointing Uniformities remove them further from it; leaving a latitude and indifferency in things capable of it, is often a ſtronger preſerver of Peace and Unity. But this by the way. We will rather give ſome few Rules that may be of uſe to every particular Chriſtian, toward this common Chriſtian good of Unity of Mind.

1. Beware of two extreams, that often cauſe diviſions *captivity to Cuſtom*, on the one hand, and *affectation of Novelty*, on the other.

2*dly*. Labour for a ſtay'd Mind that will not be toſs'd with every wind of Doctrine or appearance of Reaſon, as ſome that as Fanes, eaſily are blown to any ſide, with miſtakes of the Scriptures, either ariſing in their own minds, or ſuggeſted by others.

3*dly*. In unclear and doubtful things, be not pertinacious, as the weakeſt minds are readieſt to be upon ſeeming Reaſon, which try'd will poſſibly fall to nothing: yet they are moſt aſſur'd, and cannot ſuffer a different thought in any from their own; there is naturally this *Fopeneſs* in every mans mind, and moſt, I ſay, in the ſhalloweſt a kind of fancy'd *Infallibility* in them-

themſelves, which makes them contentious, contrary to the Apoſtles Rule, *Phil.* 2. 3. And as earneſt upon differing in the ſmalleſt Punctilio, as in a high Article of Faith. Stronger Spirits are uſually more patient of contradiction, and leſs violent, eſpecially in doubtful things; and they that ſee furtheſt, are leaſt peremptory in their determinations. The Apoſtle to *Timothy*, 2 *Ep.* 1. *chap.* hath a Word, *the Spirit of a ſound Mind*; 'tis a good ſound conſtitution of mind, not to feel every blaſt, either of ſeeming reaſon to be taken with it, or of croſs opinion to be offended at it.

4*thly*. Joyn that which is there *the Spirit of Love* in this particular. Not at all abating affection for every light difference (and this the moſt are a little to blame in) whereas the abundance of that, ſhould rather fill up the gap of theſe petty diſagreements, that they do not appear, nor be at all ſenſibly to be found. No more diſaffection ought to follow this, than the difference of our Faces and Complexions, or feature of Body, which cannot be found in any two alike in all things.

And theſe things would be of eaſier perſwaſion, if we conſider'd. 1. How ſupple and flexible a thing Humane Reaſon is, and therefore not lightly to be truſted to, and that eſpecially in Divine Things; for *we here know but in part*. 2. The ſmall importance of ſome things that have bred much noiſe and diſſention in the World; as the Apoſtle ſpeaks of the Tongue, *how little a ſparke, how great a fire will it kindle*, and a great many of theſe debates, that coſt men ſo much pains and time, as far from clear deciſion, as when they began, and poſſibly of ſo little moment, that if they were ended, their profit would not quit the coſt. 3. Conſider the ſtrength of Chriſtian Charity, that if it dwelt much in our hearts, would preſerve this Union of Mind,

amidſt

amidſt very many different thoughts, ſuch as they may be, and would teach us that Excellent Leſſon, the Apoſtle gives to this purpoſe, *Phil* 3. 15, 16. *Let us therefore, as many as be perfect, be thus minded: and if in any thing ye be otherwiſe minded, God ſhall reveal even this unto you. Nevertheleſs, whereto we have already attained, let us walk by the ſame rule, let us mind the ſame thing.* Let us follow our Lord unanimouſly, in what he hath clearly manifeſted to us, and given us with one conſent to embrace, as the Spheres, notwithſtanding each one hath his particular motion, yet all are wheel'd about together with the firſt.

And that leads us to conſider the further extent of this word, to agree in Heart and in Converſation, walking by the Rule of thoſe undoubted Truths we have receiv'd. And in this I ſhall recommend theſe two things to you.

1. In the defence of the Truth, as the Lord ſhall call us, let us be of one Mind. and all as one Man, Satan acts by that Maxime and his Followers have it all, *divide and conquer*, and therefore let us hold that counter Maxime *Union invincible.*

2. In the Practice of that Truth agree as one, let your Converſation be uniform by being ſquared to that one Rule, and in all Spiritual Exerciſes joyn as one, be of one Heart and Mind: would not our Publick Worſhip, think you, prove much more both comfortable and profitable, if our hearts met in it as one, that we could ſay of our hearing the Word, as he, *Acts* 10. *We are all here preſent before God to hear all things*, &c. And if our Prayers aſcended up as one Pillar of Incenſe to the Throne of Grace, if they beſieg'd it, as an Army all ſurrounding it together, for the obtainment of favour to our ſelves and the Church? This is much with God the

Stipato agmine Deum obſidentes. Tertull.

the conſent of hearts petitioning, ſo ſays our Saviour *Where two or three are gathered*, not their bodies within the ſame Walls only, for ſo they are but ſo many Carkaſſes tumbled together, and the promiſe of his being amongſt us, not made to that, *for he is the God of the Living and not of the Dead*, 'tis the Spirit of darkneſs that abides amongſt the Tombs and Graves; but *gathered in my name*, one in that one holy name, written upon their hearts and uniting them, and ſo thence expreſs'd in their joynt-Services and Invocations: ſo he ſays there of them, *who agree upon any thing they ſhall ask*, if all their hearts preſent and hold it up together, if they make one cry or ſong of it, that harmony of their hearts ſhall be ſweet in the Lord's ears, and ſhall draw a gracious anſwer out of his hand, if ye agree, your joynt petitions, ſhall be as it were an arreſt or decree that ſhall ſtand in Heaven, it ſhall be done for them of my Father which is in Heaven. But alas where is ours? The greateſt part of Hearts ſay nothing, and others with ſuch wavering and ſuch a jarring harſh noiſe, being out of tune, earthly, too low ſet, that they ſpoil all, and diſappoint the Anſwers. Were the Cenſer fill'd with thoſe united Prayers Heaven-wards, it would be fill'd with Fire Earth-wards againſt the Enemies of the Church.

Fama eſt junctas fortius ire preces.

Matth. 18.

συμφωνῆ σωσιν.

And in your private Society, ſeek unanimouſly your own, and each anothers Spiritual Good, not only agreeing in your affairs and civil converſe; but having one heart and mind as Chriſtians: to eat and drink together, if no more, is ſuch Society as Beaſts may have, to do theſe in the exceſs, to guzzle and drink intemperately together, is a Society worſe than that of Beaſts, and below them, to diſcourſe together of civil buſineſs, is to converſe as men; but the peculiar converſe of Chriſtians

ſtians in that notion, as born again to Immortality, an unfading Inheritance above, is to further one another towards that, to put one another in mind of Heaven and things that are Heavenly. And 'tis ſtrange that men that profeſs to be Chriſtians, when they meet, either fill one anothers ears with Lies and prophane Speeches, or with Vanities and Trifles: or at the beſt with the Affairs of Earth, and not a word of thoſe things that ſhould moſt poſſeſs the Heart, and where the minds ſhould be moſt ſet: but are ready to reproach and taunt any ſuch thing in others: What? are you aſham'd of Chriſt and Religion? Why do you profeſs it then? Is there ſuch a thing, think ye, as *Communion of Saints*? if not, why ſay you believe it? 'Tis a Truth think of it as you will, the Publick Miniſtry will profit little any where, where a People or ſome part of them are not thus one, and do not live together as of one mind, and uſe diligently all due means of edifying one another in their holy Faith. How much of the primitive Chriſtians praiſe and profit is involv'd in the word *they were together* [ὁμοθυμαδὸν,] *with one accord, with one mind*, and ſo they grew, *the Lord added to the Church*?

Conſider, 1. How the Wicked are one in their ungodly Deſigns and Practices, the Scales of Leviathan, as *Luther* expreſſes, are linkt together, ſhall not the Lord's Followers be one in him? They unite to undermine the Peace of the Church, ſhall not the Godly joyn their Prayers to countermine them?

2. There is in the Heart of all the Saints one Spirit, how can they be but one, ſince they have the ſame purpoſe and journey, tend to the ſame home, and why ſhall they not walk together in that way? When they ſhall arrive there they ſhall be fully one, and of one mind, not a jar nor difference, all their Harps perfectly in tune to that one new Song. *Having*

Having Compaſſion.] This teſtifies that 'tis not a bare ſpeculative agreement of opinions, that is the badge of Chriſtian Unity, for this may accidentally be, where there is no further Union; but that they are themſelves one, have one life, in that they feel how it is one with another, there is a living ſympathy amongſt them, as making up one Body, animated with one Spirit, for that's the reaſon why the Members of the Body have that mutual feeling even the remoteſt and diſtanteſt, and the moſt excellent with the meaneſt, this the Apoſtle urges at large, *Rom.* 12. 4. and 1 *Cor.* 12.

And this lively Senſe is in every living Member of the Body of Chriſt, towards the whole, and towards each other particular part. This makes a Chriſtian rejoyce in the welfare and good of another, as if it were his own, and feel their griefs and diſtreſſes as if himſelf were really ſharer in them, for the word comprehends all feeling, together feeling of joy, as well as of grief, *Heb.* 13. 3. 1 *Cor.* 12. 26. And always where there is moſt of Grace, and of the Spirit of Jeſus Chriſt, there is moſt of this Sympathy. The Apoſtle St. *Paul*, as he was eminent in all Grace, had a large Portion of this, 2 *Cor.* 11. 29. And if this ought to be in reference to their outward condition, much more in ſpiritual things, rejoycing at the increaſes and flouriſhing of Grace in others. That baſe envy, that dwells in the hearts of rotten Hypocrites, that would have all ingroſs'd to themſelves, argues that they move not further than the compaſs of *ſelf*, that the pure love of God, and the ſincere love of their Brethren flowing from it, is not in them; but when the heart can unfeignedly rejoyce in the Lords bounty to others, and the luſtre of Grace in others,

far out-ſhining their own, truly 'tis an evidence, that what Grace ſuch a one hath, is upright and good, and that the law of Love is engraven in their hearts. And where that is, there will be likewiſe on the other ſide, a compaſſionate tender ſenſe of the infirmities and frailties of their Brethren. Whereas ſome account it a ſign of much advancement and ſpiritual proficiency to be able to ſit upon the qualifications and actions of others, and to laviſh out ſevere cenſures round about them, to ſentence one weak and of poor abilities, and another proud and lofty, and a third covetous, &c. And thus to go on in a Cenſor-like-magiſterial ſtrain; it were truly an evidence of more Grace, not to get upon the Bench to judge them, but ſit down rather and mourn for them, when they are manifeſtly and really faulty, and for their ordinary infirmities to conſider, and bear them. Theſe are the characters we find in the Scriptures of ſtronger Chriſtians *Rom.* 15. 1. *Gal.* 6. 1. This holy and humble ſympathy argues indeed, a ſtrong Chriſtian, *and nothing truly* (as one ſays) *ſhews a ſpiritual Man ſo much, as the dealing with another Mans ſin*; far will he be from the ordinary way of inſulting, and trampling upon the weak or uſing rigour and bitterneſs, even againſt ſome groſs falls of a Chriſtian, but will rather vent his compaſſion in tears than his paſſion in fiery raylings, will bewail the frailty of Man, and our dangerous condition in this Life, amidſt ſo many ſnares and tentations, and ſuch ſtrong and ſubtle enemies.

Nil tam ſpiritualem virum indicat, quam peccati alieni tractatio.

2 *dly.* As this ſympathy works to particular Chriſtians in their ſeveral conditions, ſo by the ſame reaſon it acts, and acts more eminently towards the Church, and the publick Affairs, that concern its good. And this is it, that we find, hath breath'd forth from the hearts

hearts of the Saints, in former times in ſo many pathetical complaints and Prayers for *Sion*. Thus *David* in his ſaddeſt times, when he might ſeem moſt diſpenſable to forget other things, and be wholly taken up with lamenting his own fall, *Pſal.* 51. yet even there he leaves not out the Church, ver. 17. *in thy good pleaſure do good to Zion*. And his heart broken all to pieces, yet the very pieces cry no leſs for the building of *Jeruſalems* Walls, than for the binding up and healing of it ſelf, and in that *Pſal.* that ſeem's to be the expreſſion of his joy being exalted to the Throne, and ſitting peaceably on it, yet he ſtill thus prays for *the peace of Jeruſalem*. And the Penman of that 137. *Pſalm* makes it an execrable overſight to forget *Jeruſalem ver.* 5. or to remember it coldly, or ſecundarily; no leſs will ſerve him than to *prefer it to his chief joy*. Whatſoever elſe is *top* or *head of his joy* (as the word is) *Jeruſalems* welfare ſhall be its Crown, ſhall be ſet above it. And the Prophet, whoever it was, that wrote that, poured out that Prayer from an afflicted Soul, comforts himſelf in this, that *Zion* ſhall be favoured, *my bones are conſum'd*, &c. But it matters not, what becomes of me, let me languiſh and wither away, provided *Sion* flouriſh, tho' I feel nothing but pains and troubles, yet thou wilt ariſe and ſhew mercy to *Sion*; I am content; that ſatisfies me. *Pſal.* 122.

But where is now this Spirit of high ſympathy with the Church, ſure if there were of it in us 'tis now a fit time to act it. If we be not altogether dead, ſure we will be ſtirr'd with the voice of thoſe late ſtroaks of Gods hand, and be driven to more humble and earneſt prayer by it. Men will change their poor baſe grumblings about their privacy, Oh! what ſhall I do &c. into ſtrong cries for the Church of God, and the publick deliverance

deliverance of all theſe Kingdomes from the raging Sword: but vile ſelfiſhneſs undoes us, the moſt looking no further; if themſelves and theirs might be ſecur'd would regard little what became of the reſt, as one ſaid, *when I am dead, let the World be fir'd*: but the Chriſtian mind is of a larger Sphere, looks not only upon more than it ſelf in preſent, but even to after Times and Ages, and can rejoyce in the good to come, when it ſelf ſhall not be here to partake of it, is more dilated and liker unto God, and to our head *Jeſus Chriſt*. *The Lord*, ſays the Prophet *Eſay*, *in all his peoples affliction, was afflicted himſelf*; and Jeſus Chriſt accounts the ſufferings of his Body the Church his own. *Saul, Saul, why perſecuteſt thou me?* the heel was trod upon on earth and the head cryeth from Heaven, as ſenſible of it, and this in all our evils, eſpecially our ſpiritual Griefs, is a high point of comfort to us, that our Lord Jeſus is not inſenſible of them: This emboldens us to complain our ſelves, and to put in our petitions for help to the Throne of Grace through his hand, knowing that when he preſents he will ſpeak his own ſenſe of our condition, and move for us as it were for himſelf, as we have it ſweetly expreſs'd *Heb.* 4. 15. 16. Now as it is our comfort ſo it is our pattern.

Love as Brethren] Hence ſprings this feeling we ſpeak of, Love is the cauſe of union, and union the cauſe of ſympathy, and of that unanimity before, they that have the ſame ſpirit uniting and animating them, cannot but have the ſame Mind, and the ſame feelings. And this Spirit is derived from that head Chriſt, *in whom* Chriſtians *live, and move, and have their being*, their new and excellent being, and ſo in living in him they love him, and are one in him, they are Brethren, as here the word is, their fraternity holds in him; he is head

of

of it, *the first born among many Brethren.* Men are Brethren in two natural respects, their Bodies of the same earth, and their Souls breathed from the same God; but this third fraternity that is founded in Christ, is far more excellent, and more firm than the other two; for being one in him they have there taken in the other two, for that in him is our whole Nature, he is the *Man Christ Jesus*, but to the advantage, and 'tis an infinite one, being one in him, we are united by the Divine Nature in him, who is God blessed for ever; and this is the highest certainly, and the strongest union that can be imagin'd. Now this is a great Mystery indeed, as the Apostle says, speaking of this same point, the union of Christ and his Church; whence their union and Communion one with another, that make up that Body, the Church, is deriv'd. In Christ every believer is born of God, is his Son, and so they are not only Brethren, one with another, that are so born: but Christ himself own's them as his Brethren, *both he which sanctifies, and they who are sanctified are all of one, for which cause he is not asham'd to call them Brethren.* Heb. 2. 11.

Sin broke all to pieces, Man from God, and one from another, Christ's work in the World was *Union*, to make up these breaches he came down, and begun the union which was his work in the wonderful union made in his Person that was to work it, made God and Man one, and as the Nature of Man was reconciled, so by what he performed the Persons of Men are united to God, Faith makes them one with him, and he makes them one with the Father, and from these results this oneness amongst themselves, concentring and meeting in Jesus Christ, and in the Father through him, they are made one together. And that this was his

Joh. 17. his great work, we may read in his Prayer, where it is the burden and main ſtrain, the great requeſt, he ſo iterates, *that they may be one, as we are one* ver. 11. a high compariſon, ſuch as Man durſt not name: but after him that ſo warrants us, and again *ver.* 21. *that they all may be one, as thou Father art in me, and I in thee, that* they *alſo may be one in us*, and ſo on.

So that certainly where this is, it is the ground work of another kind of Friendſhip and love, than the World is acquainted with, or is able to judge of, and hath more worth in one drachme of it, than all the quinteſſence of civil or natural affection can amount to. The friendſhip of the World, the beſt of them, are but tyed with chains of glaſs, but this fraternal love of Chriſtians, is a Golden chain, both more precious, and more ſtrong and laſting: the other are worthleſs and brittle.

The Chriſtian ows and pays a General Charity, and good will to all; but peculiar and intimate friendſhip he cannot have, but with ſuch as come within the compaſs of this fraternal love. Which after a ſpecial manner flows from God, and returns to him, and abides in him, and ſhall remain unto eternity.

Where this love is, and abounds it will baniſh far away all thoſe diſſentions, and bitterneſſes, and thoſe frivolous miſtakings, that are ſo frequent amongſt the moſt, it will teach wiſely and gently to admoniſh one another, where it is needful: but further than that, it will paſs by many offences, and failings, and cover a multitude of ſins, and will very much ſweeten Society and make it truly profitable, therefore the Pſalmiſt calls it, *how good and pleaſant that Brethren dwell together in unity*, it perfumes all, as the precious oyntments, &c.

But

But many that are called Chriſtians are not indeed of this Brotherhood, and therefore no wonder they know not what this love means, but are either of reſtleſs unquiet Spirits, biting and devouring one another, as the Apoſtle ſpeaks, or at the beſt, only civilly ſmooth and peaceable in their carriage, but rather ſcorners than partakers of this ſpiritual love and fraternity, are ſtrangers to Chriſt, not brought into acquaintance and union with him, and therefore void of the life of Grace, and the fruits of it, whereof this is a chief one. Oh! how few amongſt multitudes that throng in as we do here together, are indeed partakers of the *glorious liberty of the Sons of God*, or ambitious of that high and happy eſtate.

As for you that know theſe things, and have a portion in them, that have your communion with the Father, and his Son Jeſus Chriſt, I beſeech you adorn your holy profeſſion, and teſtifie your ſelves the Diſciples and the Brethren of Jeſus Chriſt by this mutual love, ſeek to underſtand better what it is, and to know it more practically. Conſider that ſourſe of love, that love that the Father hath ſhewed us in this, that we ſhould be called the Sons of God and ſo be Brethren, and thence draw more of this ſweet ſtream of love. *God is love*, ſays the Apoſtle, therefore ſure where there is moſt of God, there is moſt of this Divine Grace, this holy love. Look upon and ſtudy much that infinite love of God, and his Son Jeſus Chriſt towards us, he gave his only begotten Son, the Son gave himſelf, he ſweeten'd his bitter cup with his tranſcendent love, and this he hath recommended to us, that even as he loved us, ſo ſhould we love one another: we know we cannot reach this higheſt pattern, that's not meant, but the more we look on it, the higher we ſhall reach in

this love, and ſhall learn ſome meaſure of ſuch love on Earth as is in Heaven, and that which ſo begins here ſhall be perfected there.

Be pitiful, be courteous.] The Roots of Plants are hid under Ground ſo that themſelves are not ſeen, but they appear in their Branches, and Flowers, and Fruits, which argue there is a Root and Life in them; thus the Graces of the Spirit planted in the Soul, though themſelves inviſible, yet diſcover their Being and Life in the Tract of a Chriſtian's Life, their Words, and Actions, and the frame of their carriage; thus Faith ſhews that it lives, as the Apoſtle St. *James* teacheth at large, and thus Love, a Grace of ſo active a nature, that it is ſtill working and yet never weary, *your labour of love*, ſays the Apoſtle; it labours, but delight makes the hardeſt labour ſweet and eaſie, and ſo proper is action to it, that all action is null without it, 1 *Cor.* 13. yea it knits Faith and Action together, is the link that unites them, *Faith worketh*; but 'tis by it, as the Apoſtle teaches us, *by Love*, ſo then where this Root is, theſe Fruits will ſpring from it and diſcover it, *Pity* and *Courteſie*.

They are of a larger extent in their full Sphere than the precedeing, for from a general love due to all, they act towards all, to men, or humanity, in the general. And this not from a bare natural tenderneſs, which ſofter complexions may have, nor from a prudent moral conſideration of their own poſſible falling under the like, or greater calamities: but out of obedience to God, who requires this merciſulneſs in all his Children, and cannot own them for his, unleſs in this they reſemble him. And it is indeed an evidence of a truly Chriſtian mind, to have much of this pity to the miſeries of all, being rightly principled, and acting after a Pious and Chriſtian

Chriſtian manner towards the Sick and Poor, of what condition ſoever, yea moſt pitying the ſpiritual miſery of ungodly men, their hardneſs of heart, and unbelief, and earneſtly wiſhing their converſion, not repining at the long-ſuffering of God, as if thou would'ſt have the Bridge cut, becauſe thou art over, as St. *Auguſtine* ſpeaks, but longing rather to ſee that long-ſuffering and goodneſs of God lead them to repentance, being griev'd to ſee men ruining themſelves, and diligently working their own deſtruction, *going in any way of wickedneſs,* (as *Solomon* ſpeaks of one particularly) *as an Ox to the Shambles, or a Fool to the correction of the Stocks.* Certainly the ungodly Man is an object of the higheſt pity.

But there is a ſpecial debt of this pity to thoſe that we love as Brethren in our Lord Jeſus, theſe are moſt cloſely linkt by a peculiar fraternal love. Their ſufferings and calamities will move the Bowels that have Chriſtian affection within them. Nor is it an empty helpleſs pity; but carries with it the real communication of our help to our utmoſt power. [εὐσπλαγχνοι] Not only Bowels that are moved themſelves with pity, but that move their hand to ſuccour for by this word the natural affection of Parents, and the tenderer of them, the Mother, are expreſs'd, who do not idly behold and bemoan their Children being ſick or diſtreſs'd, but provides all poſſible help, their bowels are not only ſtirr'd, but dilated and enlarged towards them.

And if our feeling bowels and helping hand are due to all, and particularly to the Godly, and we ought to pay this due in outward diſtreſſes, how much more in their Soul-afflictions, the rather, becauſe theſe are moſt heavy in themſelves, and leaſt underſtood, and therefore leaſt regarded, yea ſometimes more by natu-

ral Friends, possibly by their bitter scoffes and taunts, or by their slighting, or at best by their misapplying of proper helps and remedies, which as unfit Medicines do rather exasperate the Disease: therefore they that do understand, and can be sensible of that kind of wound, ought so much the more to be tender and pitiful towards it, and to deal mercifully and gently with it. It may be very weak things sometimes trouble a weak Christian, but there is in the Spirit of the Godly a humble condescention learn'd from Christ, who *broke not the bruised reed, nor quenched the smoaking flax.*

The least difficulties and scruples in a tender conscience should not be roughly encounter'd, they are as a knot in a silken thread, and require a gentle and wary hand to loose them.

Now this tenderness of bowels, and inclinement to pity all, especially Christians, and them especially in their peculiar pressures, is not a weakness as some kind of Spirits take it to be, this even naturally is a generous pity in greatest Spirits. Christian pity is not womanish, yea 'tis more than manly, 'tis divine, there is of it natural, most in the best, and most ingenuous natures; but where 'tis spiritual, 'tis a prime lineament of the Image of God, and the more absolute and disengag'd it is, in regard of those towards whom it acts, the more like unto God, looking upon misery as a sufficient incentive of pity and mercy, without the ingredient of any other consideration: 'Tis a pure vulgar piece of goodness to be helpful and bountiful to Friends, or to such as are within appearance of requital, 'tis a trading kind of Commerce that: but pity and bounty that needs no inducements, but the meeting of a fit Object to work on, where it can expect nothing, save only the priviledge of doing good, (which in it self is so sweet)

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is God-like indeed, who is rich in bounty without any neceſſity, yea or poſſibility of return from us; for we have neither any thing to confer upon him, nor hath he need of receiving any thing, who is the ſpring of Goodneſs and of Being.

And that we may the better underſtand him in this, he is pleas'd to expreſs this merciful nature in our notion and language, by *bowels of mercy and pity*, and the *ſtirring* and *ſounding* of them, and *Pſ.* 103. *The pity of a Father*, and *If.* 49. *of a Mother*, nothing tender and ſignificant enough to expreſs his compaſſions. Hence our Redemptions, *If.* 63. 9. hence all our hopes of Happineſs. The gracious Lord ſaw his poor Creatures undone by ſin, and no power in Heaven nor in Earth able to reſcue but his own alone; therefore his pity was moved, and his hand anſwers his heart, his own arm brought Salvation, he ſent *the Deliverer out of Sion, to turn away iniquity from Jacob.* And in all exigences of his Children, he is overcome with their Complaints, cannot hold out againſt their moanings, he may as *Joſeph*, ſeem ſtrange for a while, but cannot act that ſtrangeneſs long, his heart moves and ſounds to theirs, gives the Eccho to their Griefs and Groans, as they ſay of two ſtrings that are perfect Uniſons, touch the one the other alſo ſounds, *Jer.* 31. 19. Oh the unſpeakable priviledge to have him for our Father, who is the Father of Mercies and Compaſſions, and thoſe not barren fruitleſs pityings, for he is withal *the God of all conſolations*, do not think that he can ſhut out a bleeding Soul that comes to him, and refuſe to take, and to bind up, and heal a broken heart that offers it ſelf to him, puts it ſelf into his hand, and intreats his help, doth he require pity of us, and doth he give it to us, and is it not infinitely more in himſelf? all that is in

If. 54. 7, 8. *Hoſ.* 11. 8.

Angels

Angels and Men is but an inſenſible drop to that Ocean.

Let us then conſider both that we are oblig'd to pity eſpecially to our Chriſtian Brethren, and to uſe all means for their help within our reach, to have bowels ſtirr'd with the reports of ſuch bloodſheds and cruelties as come to our ears, and to beſtir our ſelves according to our Places and Power for them, but ſure all are to move this one way, for their help, to run to the Throne of Grace: if your bowels ſound for your Brethren, let them ſound that way for them, to repreſent their eſtate to him that hath higheſt, both pity and power; for he expects to be remembranced by us, he put that office upon his People to be his Recorders for *Zion*, and they are Traytors to it, that neglect the diſcharge of that place.

Courteous.] The former relates to the Afflictions of others, this to our whole carriage with them in any condition, and yet there is a particular regard of it in communicating good, ſupplying their wants or comforting them that are diſtreſs'd, that it be not done, or rather, I may ſay, undone in doing with ſuch ſupercilious roughneſs, venting either in looks or words, or any way, that ſowrs it, and deſtroys the very being of a Benefit, and turns it rather into an injury; and generally the whole Converſation of Men is made unpleaſant by cynical harſhneſs and diſdain.

This the Apoſtle recommends, is contrary to that Evil, not only in the Superfice and outward Behaviour. No, Religion doth not preſcribe nor is ſatisfied with ſuch courteſie as goes no deeper than words and geſtures, which ſometimes is moſt contrary to that ſingleneſs Religion owns, theſe are the upper Garments of Malice ſaluting him aloud in the Morning, whom they

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are undermining all the day, and ſometimes tho' more innocent, yet it may be troubleſome, meerly by the vain affectation and exceſs of it; and even this becomes not a wiſe Man, much leſs a Chriſtian: an over-ſtudy or acting of that, is a token of emptineſs, and is below a ſolid mind, though they know ſuch things and could outdo the ſtudiers of it, yet they (as it indeeds deſerves) do deſpiſe it. Nor is it that graver and wiſer way of external plauſible Deportment that anſwers fully this Word, 'tis the outer half indeed; but the thing is [φιλοφρονύνη] a radical ſweetneſs in the Temper of the Mind, that ſpreads it ſelf into a Man's Words and Actions, and this not meerly natural, a gentle kind diſpoſition which is indeed a natural advantage that ſome have, but this is ſpiritual, from a new Nature deſcended from Heaven, and ſo in its Original and Nature far excels the other, ſupplies it where it is not in Nature, and doth not only increaſe it where it is, but elevates it above it ſelf, renews it, and ſets a more excellent ſtamp upon it. Religion is in this miſtaken ſometimes, in that men think it imprints an unkindly roughneſs and auſterity upon the mind and carriage; indeed it bars and baniſhes all vanity, and lightneſs, and all compliance and eaſie partaking with ſin. Religion ſtrains and quite breaks that point of falſe and injurious courteſie, to ſuffer thy Brother's Soul to run hazard of periſhing, and to ſhare of his guiltineſs by not admoniſhing him after that ſeaſonable, and prudent, and gentle manner (for that indeed would be ſtudied) that becomes thee as a Chriſtian, and that particular reſpective manner that becomes thy Station. Theſe things rightly qualifying it, it doth no wrong to good manners and the courteſie here enjoyn'd, but is truly a part of it, by due admoniſhments and reproofs to ſeek to reclaim a Sinner, 'twere

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worſt unkindneſs not to do't, *thou ſhalt not hate thy Brother*, &c.

But that which is true lovingneſs of heart and carriage, Religion doth not only no way prejudice, but you ſee requires it in the Rule, and where it is wrought in the Heart, works and cauſes it there; fetches out that crookedneſs and harſhneſs that is otherwiſe invincible in ſome humours, *Iſa.* 11. *Makes the Wolf dwell with the Lamb.* This Chriſtians ſhould ſtudy, and belie the prejudices of the World, that they take up againſt the Power of Godlineſs, to be inwardly ſo Minded and of ſuch outward Behaviour, as becomes that Spirit of Grace that dwells in them, to endeavour to gain thoſe that are without by their kind obliging Converſation.

Emollit mores nec ſinit eſſe feros.

In ſome copies, 'tis [ταπεινόφρονες,] *humble*, and indeed as this is excellent in it ſelf, and a chief character of a Chriſtian, it agrees well with all theſe mention'd, and carries along with it this inward and real, not acted courteouſneſs. Not to inſiſt on it now, it gains at all hands with God and with Men, receives much Grace from God, and kills envy, and commands reſpect and good will from Men.

Thoſe ſhowers of grace that ſlide off from the lofty Mountains reſt on the Valleys and make them fruitful. He giveth grace, loves to beſtow it where there is moſt room to receive it, and moſt return of ingenuous and entire praiſes upon the receipt: and ſuch is the humble Heart, and truly as much humility gains much grace, ſo it grows by it.

1. 'Tis one of the Worlds reproaches againſt thoſe that go beyond their ſize in Religion, that they are proud and ſelf conceited: Chriſtians, beware there be nothing in you juſtifying this, ſure they that have moſt true grace are leaſt guilty of it, common knowledge and gifts may puff up, but grace does not.

He

He whom the Lord loads moſt with his richeſt gifts, ſtoops loweſt as preſſed down with the weight of them; the Free Love of God humbles the Heart moſt, to which it is moſt manifeſted.

Ille eſt qui ſuperbire nequit, cui Deus oſtendit miſericordiam ſuam.

And towards Men it graces all Grace and all gifts, and glorifies God, and teaches others ſo to do. It is the *preſerver of Graces*; ſometimes ſeems to wrong them by hiding them: but indeed it is their ſafety. *Hezekiah* by a vain ſhewing of his jewels and treaſures forfeited them all.

Conſervatrix virtutum Prodendo perdidit.

Verſe 9.

9 *Not rendring evil for evil; or railing for railing: but contrary wiſe bleſſing; knowing that ye are thereunto called, that ye ſhould inherit a bleſſing.*

OPpoſition helps Grace both to more ſtrength and more luſtre, when Chriſtian Charity is not encounter'd with the Worlds malignance, it hath an eaſier task: but aſſaulted and overcoming, it ſhines the brighter, and riſes higher, and thus it is when it *renders not evil for evil.*

To repay good with evil is amongſt Men the top of iniquity, yet this is our univerſal guiltineſs towards God, he multiplying mercies and we vying with multiply'd ſins, as the Lord complains of *Iſrael, as they were increaſed, ſo they ſinned.* The loweſt ſtep of good mutual amongſt Men, is not to be bent to provoke others with injuries, and being unoffended to offend none, but this, not to repay offences, nor *render evil for evil*

is a Christians rule, and yet further to return *good* for *evil*, and *blessing* for *cursing*, is not only counsell'd (as some vainly distinguish) but commanded.

It is true the most have no ambition for this degree of goodness; aspire no further but to do or say no evil unprovoked, and think themselves sufficiently just and equitable if they keep in that; but this is lame, is but half the rule. Thou thinkest injury obliges thee, or if not so, yet excuses thee to revenge, or at least disobliges thee, unties thy engagement of wishing and doing good; but these are all gross practical errours.

For *1st*. The second injury done by way of revenge differs from the first that provoked it little or nothing, but only in point of time, and certainly no one Man's sin can procure priviledge to another to sin in that, or the like kind. If another hath broken the bonds of his allegiance and Obedience to God, and of charity to thee, yet thou art not the less ty'd by the same Bonds still.

2dly. By revenge of injuries thou usurpest upon God's prerogative who is the *Avenger*, as the Apostle teaches, *Rom*. 12. this doth not forbid either the Magistrats Sword for just punishment of Offenders, or the Souldiers Sword in a just War; but such revenges, as without authority or a lawfull call, the pride and perverseness of Men do multiply one against another: In which is involv'd a presumptuous contempt of God, and his supreme authority, or at least the unbelief and neglect of it.

3dly. It cannot be genuine upright goodness that hath its dependance upon the goodness of others that are about us; that as they say of the vain glorious Man, his vertue lyeth in the beholders eye, if thy Meekness and Charity be such as lyeth in the good and mild carriage of others towards *thee*, in their Hand

and

and Tongues, thou art not owner of it intrinſecally; ſuch quiet and calm, if none provoke thee, is but an accidental uncertain ceſſation of thy turbulent Spirit unſtirr'd, but move it and it acts it ſelf according to it ſelf, ſends up that Mind that lay at the bottom; but true Grace doth then moſt manifeſt what it is, when thoſe things that are moſt contrary ſurround and aſſault it; it cannot correſpond and hold game with injuries and raylings, hath no faculty for that, for anſwering evil with evil, a Tongue enur'd to graciouſneſs, and mild Speeches and Bleſſings, and a heart ſtor'd ſo within can vent no other, try it, and ſtir it as you will. A Chriſtian acts and ſpeaks not according to what others are towards him, but according to what he is through the grace and Spirit of God in him, as they ſay, *quicquid recipitur, recipitur ad modum recipientis* the ſame things are differently received and work differently as the Nature and way is of that which receives them: A ſparkle blows up one of a ſulphureous temper; and many Coals, greater injuries, and reproaches are quench'd and looſe their force being thrown at another of a Cool Spirit *Prov.* 17. 27.

They that have malice, and bitterneſs, and curſings within, though theſe ſleep it may be, yet awake them with the like, and the Proviſion comes forth out of the abundance of the heart; give them an ill word and they have another, or two for one in readineſs for you; where the Soul is furniſhed with ſpiritual bleſſings there bleſſings, come forth even in anſwer to reproaches and indignities, *the mouth of the Wiſe is a Tree of Life*, ſays *Solomon*, can bear no other fruit, but according to its kind, and the Nature of the root, an honeſt ſpiritual heart, pluck at it who will, they can pull no other fruit but ſuch fruit. Love and Meekneſs lodge there, and

therefore whoſoever knocks, theſe make the anſwer.

Let the World account it a deſpicable ſimplicity, ſeek you ſtill more of that Dove-like Spirit, the Spirit of meekneſs and bleſſing, a poor glory to vie railings and conteſt in that faculty or any kind of vindictive returns of evil; the moſt abject creatures have of that great Spirit, as fooliſh poor Spirited perſons account it; but it is the glory of Man to paſs by a tranſgreſſion, the nobleſt victory, and, as we mention'd, the higheſt example. God is our Pattern in Love and Compaſſions, we are well warranted to do't in this. Men eſteem much more of ſome other vertues that make more ſhew, and trample upon theſe, Love, and Compaſſion, and Meekneſs: but though theſe violets grow low, and are of a dark colour, yet they are of a very ſweet and diffuſive ſmell, odoriferous Graces, and the Lord propounds himſelf our example in them, *Matth.* 5. 'tis to be truly the Children of your Father, your Father which is in Heaven, *to love them that hate you, and bleſs them that curſe you*; 'tis a kind of perfection *ver.* 48. *He makes his Sun to ſhine on the Righteous and the Wicked*, &c. Be you like it, howſoever Men behave themſelves, keep you your courſe, and let your benign influence, as you can, do good to all. And Jeſus Chriſt ſets in himſelf theſe things before us, *Learn of me* not to heal the ſick, or raiſe the dead, but *Learn, for I am meek and lowly in Heart.* And if you be his Followers, this is your way, as the Apoſtle here addeth, *hereunto are you called*, and this is the end of it, agreeable to the way, *that you may inherit a bleſſing.*

[Εἰδότες ὅτι] *Knowing that*] Underſtanding aright the Nature of your holy calling, and then conſidering it wiſely and conforming to it.

They that have nothing beyond an external calling and

and profeſſion of Chriſtianity, are wholly blind in this point, do not think what this imports, *a Chriſtian*. Could they be drawn to this, it were much, it were indeed all, to know to what they are called, and to anſwer it, to walk like it: but as one calls a certain ſort of Lawyers, *indoctum doctorum genus*, we may call the moſt *an unchriſtian kind of Chriſtians*.

But even they that are real partakers of this ſpiritual and effectual Call, yet are much to ſeek in this often viewing their rule, and laying it to their Life, their hearts, and words, and actions, and ſquaring by it, and often poſing themſelves, ſuits this my calling? Is this like a Chriſtian? 'Tis a main point in any civil Station to have a ſuitable convenient carriage to a Man's Station and condition; that his actions become him: but how many incongruities and ſoleciſms do we commit, forgetting our ſelves, who we are, and what we are called to; to what as our duty, and to what, as our portion and inheritance; and theſe indeed agree together, we are called to an *undefiled*, a *holy Inheritance*, and therefore likewiſe to be *Holy* in our way to it, for that contains all. We are called to a better eſtate at home, and called to be fitted for it, while we are here, to an *Inheritance of light* and therefore to *walk* as *Children of light* and ſo here to *bleſſing*, as our inheritance and to *bleſſing* as our duty, for this [εἰς τοῦτο *Thereunto*] relates to both, looks back to the one, and forward to the other, the way and the end, both Bleſſing. [*Caputartis eſt decere quod facias.*]

The fulneſs of this inheritance is reſerv'd till we come to that Land where it lyeth, there it abideth us: but the earneſts of that fulneſs of *bleſſing* are beſtow'd on us here, *ſpiritual bleſſings in heavenly places in Chriſt*, they deſcend from thoſe heavenly places upon the heart, that precious name of our Lord Jeſus powred on our hearts, if we be indeed intereſſed in him (as we pretend)

tend) and we have peace with God through our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, we are put in poſſeſſion of that bleſſing of forgiveneſs of ſin, and in terms of love, and amity with the Father, being reconciled by the blood of his Son, and then bleſſed with the anointing of the Spirit, the graces infus'd from Heaven: now all theſe do ſo cure the bitter accurſed diſtempers of our natural Hearts, and ſo perfume it, that it cannot well breath any thing but ſweetneſs and bleſſing towards others, being it ſelf thus bleſſed of the Lord, it ecchoes bleſſing, both to God and Men, to his bleſſing of it, and its words, and whole carriage, are *as the ſmell of a Field that the Lord hath bleſſed*, as old *Jacob* ſaid of his Son's Garments. The Lord having ſpoke pardon to a Soul, and inſtead of the curſe due to ſin, bleſs'd it with a title to glory; it eaſily and readily ſpeaks pardon, and not only pardon, but bleſſing to the advantage, even to theſe that outrage it moſt and deſerve worſt of it; reflects ſtill on that, Oh! what deſerv'd I at my Lords hands, ſo many talents forgiven me, ſhall I ſtick at forgiving a few pence?

And then call'd to inherit a *bleſſing*, ſo every Believer an heir of *bleſſing*: and not only are the ſpiritual bleſſings he hath received, but even his largeneſs of bleſſing others is a pledge to him an evidence of that heirſhip: as thoſe that are bent to curſing though provok'd, yet can look upon that as a ſad mark that they are heirs of a curſe, *Pſ.* 109. 18. ſhall they not that delight in curſing, have then enough of it, when they ſhall hear that doleful word, *go ye curſed, &c.* And on the other ſide as for the Sons of bleſſing that ſpar'd it not to any, the bleſſing they are Heirs to, is a bleſſedneſs it ſelf, and they to be enter'd into it by that joyful ſpeech, *come ye bleſſed of my Father*, &c.

Men can but bleſs one another in good wiſhes and the

the Lord in praiſes, and applauding to his bleſſedneſs, but the Lord's bleſſing is really making bleſſed, an operative word, brings the thing with it.

Inherit a Bleſſing] Not called to be exempted from troubles and injuries here, and to be extoll'd and favour'd by the World; but on the contrary rather to ſuffer the utmoſt of their malice, and be the mark of their arrows, of wrongs, and ſcoffs, and reproaches: but it matters not, this weighs down all, you are called *to inherit a bleſſing*, which all their curſings and hate cannot prejudge you of: for as this inheriting of bleſſing binds on the duty of bleſſing others upon a Chriſtian, ſo it encourages to go through the hardeſt contrary meaſure, they receive from the World: if the World ſhould bleſs you, and applaud you never ſo loud, yet that bleſſing cannot be call'd an inheritance, they fly away, and dy out in the air, have no ſubſtance at all, much leſs that endurance that may make them an inheritance; and more generally, is their any thing here, ſo to be called; the ſureſt inheritances are not more than for term of Life to any one Man, their abiding is for others that ſucceed, but he removes, and when a Man is to remove from all he hath poſſeſs'd and rejoyc'd in here, then fool indeed if nothing provided for the longer, O! how much longer abode he muſt make elſewhere. Will he not then bewail his madneſs? that he was hunting a Shaddow all his Life time, and may be turned out of all his quiet poſſeſſions and eaſie dwelling before that; (and in theſe times we may the more readily think of this) but at the utmoſt at night, when he ſhould be for moſt reſt, when that ſad night comes after this day of faireſt proſperity, the unbeleiving unrepenting ſinner lies down in ſorrow in a woful bed, then muſt he, whether he will or no, enter poſſeſſion to

Qui thesaurum tuum alieno in ore conſtituis, ignoras quod arca iſta non claudatur?

Si hæc ſunt veſtra tollite ea vobiſcum. S. Bern.

to this inheritance of everlasting burnings: he hath an inheritance indeed, but he had better want it, and himself too be turn'd to nothing. Do you believe there are treasures that neither Thief breaks into, nor is there any inward moth to corrupt them; an inheritance that tho' the whole World be turned upside down, is in no hazard of a touch of damage, a Kingdom that not only cannot fall, but cannot be shaken? Oh! be wise and consider your latter end, and whatsoever you do, look after this blessed inheritance, seek to have the right to it in Jesus Christ, and the Evidences and Seals of it from his Spirit, and if it be so with you, your Hearts will be upon it and your lives will be like it.

Verse 10.

10. *For he that will love life, and see good days, let him refrain his Tongue from Evil, and his Lips that they speak no guile.*

THe rich bounty of God diffuses it self throughout the World upon all, yet there is a select number, that hath peculiar blessings of his *right hand*, that the rest of the World share not in, and even to common blessings they are differenced by a peculiar title to them, and sweetness in them, their blessings are so indeed, and entirely so, outside, and inside, and more within than they appear without; the Lord himself is their portion, and they are his. This is their blessedness which in a low estate they can challenge, and outvie all the painted prosperity of the World. Some kind of blessings do abundantly

abundantly run over upon others, but the Cup of bleſſings, it belongs unto the Godly by a new right from Heaven graciouſly conferr'd upon them, others ſent away with gifts (as they apply that) but the inheritance is *Iſaac's*; they are called to be the Sons of God, and are like him, as his Children, in goodneſs and bleſſing: the Inheritance of bleſſing is theirs alone, *called*, ſays the Apoſtle, *to inherit a bleſſing*; and all the promiſes in the great Charter of both Teſtaments run in that appropriating ſtile, entail'd to them, as only Heirs. Thus this fitly is tranſlated from the one Teſtament to the other by the Apoſtle for his preſent purpoſe, *He that will love*, &c. *Pſ.* 34 13 14.

Conſider, 1. The qualification requir'd. 2. The bleſſing annex'd and aſcertain'd to it; the Scope being to recommend a Rule ſo exact, and for that purpoſe to propound a Good ſo important and deſirable, as a ſufficient attractive to ſtudy and conform to that Rule.

The Rule is all of it one ſtreight line running through the whole Tract of a Godly Man's Life, yet you ſee clearly that it is (not cut aſunder indeed) but only mark'd into four, whereof the two latter parcels are ſomewhat longer, more generally reaching a man's ways, the two former particularly regulating the Tongue.

In the ten Words of the Law, that God delivered in ſo ſingular a manner both by Word and Writ from his own mouth and hand, there be two, that if not wholly, yet moſt eſpecially, and moſt expreſsly concern the Tongue, as a very conſiderable, though a ſmall part of man, and of theſe four words here two are beſtow'd on't.

The Apoſtle St. *James* is large in this, teaching the great Concernment of this point, *'tis a little member* (ſays he)

but boaſteth great things, needs a ſtrong Bridle; and than the bridling of it makes much for the ruling the whole Courſe of a Man's Life, as he there applies the reſemblance; yea he gives the skill of this as the very Character of perfection. And if we conſider it, it muſt be of very great conſequence how we uſe that Tongue being the main outlet of the thoughts of the heart, and the means of Society amongſt men in all Affairs Civil and Spiritual; by which men give birth to the conceptions of their own minds and ſeek to beget the like in the minds of others. The bit that is here made for mens mouths, hath theſe two halfs that make it up. 1. To refrain from open evil ſpeaking. 2. From double and guileful ſpeaking.

From Evil.] This is a large Field, the Evil of the Tongue, but I give it too narrow a name, we have good warrant to give it a much larger, a whole Univerſe, *a World of Iniquity,* a vaſt bulk of Evils, and great variety of them, as of Countries on the Earth, or Creatures in the World, and multitudes of ſuch are venemous and full of deadly poyſon, and not few Monſters, new productions of wickedneſs, *ſemper aliquid novi,* as they ſay of *Africa.*

There be in the daily diſcourſes of the greateſt part many things that belong to this World of Evil, and yet paſs unſuſpected, that we do not think them to be within its compaſs, not uſing due diligence and exactneſs in our diſcoveries of the ſeveral parts of it, although 'tis all within our ſelves, yea within a ſmall part of our ſelves, our Tongues.

It were too quick a fancy to think to travel over this World of Iniquity, the whole circuit of it, in an hour, yea or ſo much as to aim exactly at all the parts that can be taken of it in the ſmalleſt Map: but ſome

of

of the chief we would particularly take notice of, in the ſeveral four parts of it, for it will without conſtraint hold reſemblance in that diviſion with the other, yet habitable World.

I. Prophane Speech, that which is groſsly and manifeſtly wicked, and in that part. 1. Impious Speeches that directly reflect upon the glory and name of God, Blaſphemies, and Oaths, and Curſings, of which ſo great, ſo lamentable abundance amongſt us, the whole Land overſpread and defiled with it, the common noiſe that meets a man in Streets, and Houſes, and almoſt all places where he comes: and to theſe, joyn thoſe that are not ſcant amongſt us neither, ſcoffs and mocking at Religion, the power and ſtrictneſs of it, not only by the groſſer ſort, but by pretenders to ſome kind of goodneſs, for they that have attained to a ſelf-pleaſing pitch of Civility or formal Religion, have uſually that point of preſumption with it, that they make their own ſize the model and rule to examine all by; what is below it they condemn indeed, as prophane; but what is beyond it they account needleſs and affected preciſeneſs: and therefore are as ready as others to let fly invectives or bitter taunts againſt it, which are the keen and poyſoned ſhafts of the Tongue, and a perſecution that ſhall be called to a ſtrick account. 2. Impure or filthy ſpeaking which either pollutes or offends thoſe that hear them, and are the noiſom breath of a rotten polluted heart.

II. Conſider next as another grand part of the Tongue, uncharitable Speeches tending to the defaming and diſgrace of others, and theſe are likewiſe of two ſorts. 1. Open rayling and reproaches. 2. Secret ſlander and detraction. The former is unjuſt and cruel, but it is ſomewhat the leſs dangerous becauſe

open, 'tis a fight in plain field; but truly no piece of a Christian's warfare to encounter it in the same kind, the Sons of Peace are not for those Tongue-Combats, they are often no doubt set upon so, but they have another abler way of overcoming it, than by the use of the same Weapon, for they break and blunt the point of ill reproaches by meekness, and triumph over cursings with more abundant blessing, as is in the former words, which are seconded with these out of the *Psalm.* 34. 13, 14. But they that enter the lists in this kind, and are provided one for another with enraged minds, are usually not unprovided of weapons, lay hold on any thing comes next, as your Drunkards in their quarrels in their Cups and Pots, if they have any other great Reproach, they lay about them with that, as their Sword; but if they want that, true or untrue, pertinent or impertinent, all is one, they cast out any revilings that come next to hand: but there is not only wickedness, but something of baseness in these kind of conflicts that makes them more abound amongst the baser sort, and not so frequent with such as are but of a more civil breeding and quality than the vulgar.

Furor arma ministrat.

But the other of Detraction is more universal amongst all sorts, as being a far easier way of mischief in this kind, and of better conveyance. Raylings cry out the matter openly, but Detraction works all by Surprizes, and Stratagem, and mines under Ground, and therefore is much more pernicious. The former are, as the Arrows that fly by day, but this, as the Pestilence that walketh in darkness, as these two are mention'd together in the *Psalm*, it spreads and infects secretly and insensibly, is not felt but in the effects of it; and it works either by calumnies altogether forged and

and untrue, of which malice is inventive, or by the advantage of real faults (of which it is very diſcerning) and are ſtretch'd and aggravated to the utmoſt, and 'tis not expreſſible, how deep a wound a Tongue ſharpen'd to this work will give with a very little word and little noiſe, as a Raſor, as it is called in the *Pſalm*, that with a ſmall touch cuts very deep; taking things by the worſe, whereas Charity will try about all ways for a good acceptation and ſenſe of things, and takes all in be beſt. This Peſt is ſtill killing ſome almoſt in all Companies, many wounded as it's ſaid of the ſtrange Woman, *Prov.* 7. and they convey it under fair prefacing of commendation, ſo giving them poyſon in wine, both that it may paſs the better, and penetrate the more. This is a great ſin, that the Lord ranks with the firſt, when he ſets them in order againſt a Man, *Pſal.* 50.

III. Vain fruitleſs Speeches are an Evil of the Tongue, not only thoſe they call harmleſs lies, which ſome poor people take a pleaſure in, and trade much in, light buffoonries and fooliſh jeſtings, but the greateſt part of thoſe Diſcourſes which Men account the blameleſs Entertainments one of another, come under compaſs of this Evil, frothy, unſavory ſtuff, tending to no purpoſe, nor good at all. Effectleſs Words as our Saviour ſpeaks, of which we muſt render account: for that very reaſon they are in this World of evil in the Tongue, if no other way ill, yet ill as the *Arabian* Deſerts and barren Sands, fruitleſs. [ἄργον]

IV. Doubleneſs and Guile, ſo great apart, that 'tis here particularly nam'd apart, though the Evil of it is leſs known and diſcern'd, and ſo there is in it, as I may ſay, much *terra incognita*, yet it is of a very large compaſs, we may confidently ſay, as large as all the

the other three together. What of mens ſpeech is not manifeſtly evil in any of the other kinds, is the moſt of it nought this way; ſpeech good to appearance plauſible and fair, but not upright, not Silver, but Silver droſs, as *Solomon* calls it, *burning Lips*, &c. *Prov.* 26. 23. Each almoſt ſome way or other ſpeaking falſhood and deceit to his Neighbour, and daring to act this faculty with God in his Services, and our proteſtations of Obedience, religious Speeches abus'd by ſome in Hypocriſie, as holy Veſtments for a maſk or diſguiſe, doing nothing but compaſſing him about with lies, as he complains of *Ephraim*, *Hoſ.* 11. 12. deceiving indeed our ſelves, while we think to deceive him, who cannot be deceived, and will not be mocked, *Pſal.* 17. 1. He ſaw through the diſguiſes and hypocriſie of his own People, when they came to enquire at him, and yet ſtill entertain'd their Heart-Idols, as he tells the Prophet *Ezek.* 14.

The ſins of each of us, would we enter into a ſtrict account of our ſelves, would be found to ariſe to a great Sum in this kind, and they that do put themſelves upon the work of Self-trial, find (no doubt) abundant matter of deepeſt humbling, though they had no more, even in the ſin of their lips, and are by it often aſtoniſh'd at the Lord's patience, conſidering his Holineſs, as *Eſay* cried out, having ſeen the Lord in a glorious Viſion, this in particular falls upon his thoughts concerning himſelf and the people, *polluted lips*, *woe is me*, &c. And indeed 'tis a thing the Godly mind cannot be ſatisfied with, to make mention of the Lord till they be touch'd with a Coal from the Heavenly Fire of the Altar, and they eſpecially that are call'd to be the Lord's Meſſengers will ſay, as St. *Bernard*, had the Prophet need of a Coal then to unpollute his lips,

lips, then do Miniſters require *totum globum igneum.* Go through the Land and ſee if the ſins of this kind will take up much of the Bill againſt us, which the Lord ſeems now to have taken into his hands, and to be reading, and about to take order with it, becauſe we will not: would we fall to read it, he would let it fall. Is it not becauſe of Oaths that the Land mourns, or I am ſure hath now high cauſe to mourn? mocking at the power of Godlineſs, fly thick in moſt Congregations and Societies. And what is there to be found almoſt but mutual detractions and ſupplantings of the good name of another, and Tongues taught to lies, and that frame, or ſow, and *weave together deceits,* as 'tis in the 50 *Pſalm.* And even the Godly as to other ſins, ſo may be under the degrees of this, and too many are very much, by reaſon of their unwatchfulneſs and not ſtaying themſelves in this point, though not to prophane, yet to vain, and it may be to detractive Speeches, ſometimes poſſibly not with malicious intention: but out of an inadvertence of this evil, readier to ſtick on the failings of men, and it may be of other Chriſtians, than to conſider, and commend, and follow what is laudable in them; and it may be in their beſt Diſcourſes, not endeavouring to have hearts purg'd from all guile and ſelf-ends as becomes. Oh! 'tis a thing needs much diligent ſtudy, and is worth it all to be throughly ſincere and unfeigned in all, and particularly in thoſe things. Our Saviour's innocence is expreſt ſo, *In his mouth was found no guile.* *Jer.* 9. 4.

But to add ſomething for remedy of thoſe evils in ſome part diſcovered, for to vanquiſh the World of Evils is a great Conqueſt.

1. It muſt begin at the heart, otherwiſe it will be but a Mountebank cure, a falſe imagin'd conqueſt, the weights

weights and wheels are there, and the Clock ſtrikes according to their motion; even he that ſpeaks contrary to what is within him, guilfully contrary to his inward conviction and knowledge, yet ſpeaks conformably to what is within him, in the temper and frame of his heart, which is double, *a heart and a heart*, as the *Pſalmiſt* hath it. A guileful Heart makes guileful Tongue and Lips, it is the Work-houſe, where is the Forge of Deceits and Slanders, and other Evil-ſpeakings: and the Tongue only the outer ſhop where they vent, and the Lips the Door of it; ſo then ſuch Ware as is made within, ſuch and no other can be ſet out; from evil thoughts, evil ſpeakings, from a prophane heart, prophane words, and from a malicious heart bitter or calumnious words, and from a deceitful heart, guileful words well varniſh'd, but lin'd with rottenneſs. And ſo generally *from the abundance of the heart the mouth ſpeaketh*, (as our Saviour teaches.) That which the heart is full of, runs over by the Tongue, if the heart be full of God, the Tongue will delight to ſpeak of him; much of heavenly things within will ſweetly breath forth ſomething of their ſmell by the mouth; and if nothing but earth there, all that man's diſcourſe will have an earthly ſmell, and if nothing but wind, vanity, and folly, the Speech will be airy, and vain, and purpoſeleſs, *Pſ.* 37 30, 31. *Pſ.* 40. 8, 9. in the midſt of my bowels, and as from the center thou ſends forth the lines and rays of ſutable words, and will not, cannot refrain, as there it is; ſo no more can the evil heart refrain the Tongue from evil, as here is directed. *The Tongue of the Righteous*, ſays *Solomon, is as fined ſilver, but the heart of the wicked is little worth*, makes the *Antitheſis* in the root, his heart little worth, and therefore his tongue, no ſilver

in

in it: he may be worth thouſands (as we ſpeak) that is indeed in his Cheſts or Lands, and yet himſelf, his heart, and all the thoughts of it, not worth a penny.

If thou art inur'd to oaths or curſing, in any kind or faſhion of it, taking the great name of God any ways in vain, do not favour thy ſelf in it as a ſmall offence; to excuſe it by cuſtom, is to waſh thy ſelf with Ink, and to accuſe thy ſelf deeper that thou art long practic'd in that ſin, but if thou would'ſt indeed be deliver'd from it, think not that a ſlight diſlike of it (when reprov'd) will do, but ſeek for a due knowledge of the Majeſty of God, and thence a deep reverence of him in thy heart, and that will certainly help that habituated Evil of thy Tongue, will quite alter that bias that the cuſtom thou ſpeakeſt of hath given it, will caſt it in a new Mould, and teach it a new Language, will turn thy regardleſs abuſe of that name, in vain Oaths and Aſſeverations, into a holy frequent uſe of it in Prayers and Praiſes: thou wilt not then dare to indignifie that bleſſed name, that Saints and Angels bleſs and adore, but will ſet in with them to bleſs it.

None that knows the weight of it, will dally with it, and *lightly lift it up* (as that word of taking in vain in the command ſignifies) they that do continue to lift it up in vain, as it were, to ſport themſelves with it, will find the weight of it falling back upon them and cruſhing them to pieces.

In like manner a purified heart will unteach the Tongue of all filthy impure ſpeeches, and will give it a holy ſtrain, and the Spirit of Charity, and Humility will baniſh that miſchievous humour, that ſits ſo deep in the moſt, of reproaching and diſgracing others in any kind, either openly or ſecretly; for 'tis wicked ſelf-love, and pride of heart, whence thoſe do ſpring

ſearching and diſcloſing the failings of others, which love will rather caſt a Mantle on to hide them.

'Tis an argument of a candid ingenuous mind, to delight in the good name and commendation of others, to paſs by their defects, and take notice of their vertues, and to ſpeak and hear of theſe willingly, and not endure either to ſpeak or hear of the other; for in this indeed a Man may be little leſs guilty, than the evil Speaker in taking pleaſure in it, tho' you ſpeak it not. And this is a piece of Men's natural perverſneſs to drink in tales and calumnies, and he that doth this will readily from the delight he hath in hearing ſlide inſenſibly into the humour of evil ſpeaking; and it is ſtrange how the moſt diſpence with themſelves in this point, and that in no Societies almoſt ſhall we find a hatred of this ill, but rather ſome touches of pleaſingneſs in it, and until a Chriſtian ſet himſelf to an inward watchfulneſs over his heart, not ſuffering in it any thought either of uncharity, or vain ſelf eſteem upon the ſight of others frailties, they will ſtill be ſubject to ſomewhat of this in the Tongue, or Ear at leaſt. So for the evil of guile in the Tongue, a ſincere heart, *truth in the inward parts*, that powerfully redreſſes, therefore *Pſal.* 15. 'tis expreſs'd, *that ſpeaketh the truth from his heart.* Thence it flows, ſeek much after this, to ſpeak nothing with God, nor Men, but what is the ſenſe of a ſingle unfeigned heart. O ſweet truth! excellent, but rare ſincerity! He that loves that truth within alone can work it; ſeek it of him.

Obtrectatio & livor primis auribus accipiuntur.

2*dly*, Be choice in your ſociety, ſit not with vain perſons, whoſe Tongues have nothing elſe to utter but impurity, or malice, or folly. Men readily learn the dialect, and tone of the people amongſt whom they live. If you ſit down in the chair of ſcorners, take a ſeat with them, you ſhall readily take a ſhare

of

of their diet with them, and ſitting amongſt them take your turn by time of ſpeaking with them in their own language: but frequent grave and Godly Perſons in whoſe hearts and lips, piety, and love, and Wiſdom are ſet and 'tis the way to learn it.

3dly, Uſe a little of the Bridle in the quantity of ſpeech, incline a little rather to ſparing than laviſhing, for in many words there wants not ſin: That flux of the Tongue, that prating and babling diſeaſe, is very common, and hence ſo many impertinences, yea ſo many of theſe worſe ills in their diſcourſes, whiſpering about, and enquiring, and cenſuring this and that; A childiſh delight, and yet moſt Men carry it with them, all along to ſpeak of Perſons and things not concerning us; and this draws Men to ſpeak many things that agree not with the rules of wiſdom, and charity, and ſincerity, *he that refraineth his Lips is wiſe*, ſaith *Solomon*. A Veſſel without a cover cannot eſcape uncleanneſs, and much might be avoided by a little refraining of this, much infection and ſin by the many bablings that are uſual; and were it no worſe, is it not a ſufficient evil, that they waſte away that time, precious time, that cannot be recover'd; that the moſt juſt or moſt thankful Man in the World cannot reſtore. He that ſpares ſpeech, favours his Tongue indeed, as the Latin Phraſe is [*favere Linguæ*] not he that looſes the reins and lets it run, he may ponder and pre-examine what he utters, whether it be profitable and ſeaſonable or no; and ſo the Tongue of the Juſt is as fined ſilver; 'tis refined in the wiſe forethought and pondering of the heart, ſo is his advice, *Bis ad limam priuſquam ſemel ad linguam*. Even to utter Knowledge and wiſe things profuſely holds not of wiſdom, and a little uſually makes moſt noiſe, as the

Χωρὶς τὸ τ' εἰπεῖν πολλὰ καὶ τὰ κάιρια, *Æſchyl.*

Οὐδὲν οὕτως ἡδυ τοῖς ἄνθρώποις ὡς τὸ λαλεῖν τὰ ἀλλώτρια, *Naz. Orat.* 1.

Stater in lagena bis bis clamat.

Hebrew proverb is, *a penny in an earthen pot keeps a great ſound and tinkling*. Certainly 'tis the way to have much inward peace, to be wary in this point. Men think to have ſolace by much free unbounded diſcourſe with others, and when they have done, they find it otherways and ſometimes contrary. He is wiſe that hath learn't to ſpeak little with others, and much with himſelf, and with God. How much might be gained for our Souls, if we would make a right uſe of this ſilence, ſo *David* dumb to Men, found his Tongue to God, *Pſal.* 38,13,15. a ſpiritual minded Man is quickly weary of other diſcourſe, but of that which he loves and wherewith his affection is poſſeſs'd and taken up, *grave æſtimant quicquid illud non ſonat quod intus amant*, and by experience a Chriſtian will find it, that when the Lord is pleas'd to ſhew him moſt favour at Prayer or other ſpiritual exerciſe, how unſavoury it makes other diſcourſes after it; as they that have taſted ſomething ſingularly ſweet, think other things leſs ſweet, altogether taſteleſs and unpleaſant.

4. In the uſe of the Tongue when thou doeſt ſpeak, divert it from evil and guile by a habitude of, and delight in profitable and gracious diſcourſe; thus St. *Paul* makes the Oppoſition, *Eph.* 4. no rotten communication, and yet not total ſilence neither, but ſuch *as may edifie and miniſter grace to the hearers.*

Now in this we ſhould conſider, to the end ſuch diſcourſes may be more fruitful, both what is the true end of them, and the right means ſuiting it, they are not only nor principally for the learning of ſome new things, or the canvaſing of debated queſtions, but their chief good, the warming of the heart, ſtirring up in it love to God, and remembrance of our preſent and after Eſtate, our mortality and immortality, and extolling

tolling the ways of Holineſs, and the Promiſes and Comforts of the Goſpel, and the Excellency of Jeſus Chriſt, and in theſe ſometimes one particular, ſometimes another, as our particular condition requires: or any occaſion makes them pertinent, ſo that in thoſe diſcourſes ſeek not ſo much either to vent thy Knowledge, or to increaſe it; as to know more ſpiritually, and effectually what thou do'it know. And in this way thoſe mean deſpiſed Truths, that each one thinks they are ſufficiently ſeen in, will have a new ſweetneſs and uſe in them which thou didſt not ſo well perceive before, for theſe flowers cannot be ſuck'd dry, and in this humble ſincere way thou ſhalt grow in Grace and in Knowledge too.

There is no ſweeter entertainment than for Travellers to be remembring of their Country, their bleſſed Home, and the Happineſs abiding them there, and refreſhing and encouraging one another in the hopes of it, ſtrengthening their hearts againſt all the hard encounters and difficulties in the way often, often overlooking this moment, and helping each other to higher apprehenſions of that viſion of God, which we expect.

And are not ſuch Diſcourſes much more worthy the chooſing, than the baſe traſh we uſually fill one another ears withal. Were our Tongues given us to exchange folly and ſin? or were they not fram'd for the glorifying of God, and therefore are called, *our Glory*: ſome take it for the Soul; but they muſt be one in this, and then indeed are both our Tongues and Souls truely our Glory, when they are buſied in exalting his, and are tun'd together to that, *that my Glory may ſing praiſe to thee and not be ſilent*, *Pſ.* 30. 12. Inſtead of calumnies, and lies, and vanities that are the carrion, that *Flies*, baſe minds, feed on, to delight in Divine Things, and

and the extolling of God, is for a Man to eat Angels Food. An Excellent task for the Tongue that *David* chooſeth, *Pſal.* 35. 28. *And my tongue ſhall ſpeak of thy righteouſneſs, and of thy praiſe all the day long.* Were the day ten in one, no vacant room for any unholy, or offenſive, or feigned ſpeech. And they loſe not, who love to ſpeak praiſe to him, for he loves to ſpeak peace to them, and inſtead of the World's Vain-Tongue-Liberty, to have ſuch intercourſe and diſcourſe is no ſad melancholy life, as the World miſtakes it.

Verſe 11.

Let him eſchew evil, and do good; let him ſeek peace, and enſue it.

THIS is a full and compleat Rule; but this is our miſerable folly, to miſtake ſo far, as to embrace evil in the notion of good; and not only contrary to the nature of the thing, but contrary to our own experience, ſtill to be purſuing in that which is ſtill flying further off from us, catching at a vaniſhing ſhadow of delight, and nothing to faſten upon but real guiltineſs and miſery. Childiſh minds, we have been ſo often gull'd, and yet never grow wiſer, ſtill bewitched and deluded with dreams, *a deceived heart* (a mocked or deluded heart) *hath turned him aſide,* &c. when we think we are ſureſt, have that hand that holds faſteſt, our right hand upon ſome good, and now ſure we're ſped, even then it proves a lie in our right hand, ſlips through as a handful of air, and proves nothing, promiſes fair but doth but mock us, (as the ſame word is us'd by *Jacob*, *Gen.*

Iſ. 44. 20.

Gen. 31. 7. expreſſing the unfaithfulneſs of his Unkle that changed his ways ſo often) but ſtill we fooliſhly and madly truſt it, when it makes ſo groſs a lie that we might eaſily, if we took it to the light, ſee through it, being a lie ſo often diſcovered, and of known falſhood; yet ſome new dream or guiſe makes it paſs with us again, and we go round in that Mill, having our eyes out, as *Sampſon*, and ſtill where we were, perpetual fruitleſs toil. Strange that ſo baſe deceitful luſts of ſin, ſhould ſtill keep their credit with us; but the Beaſt hath a falſe Prophet at his ſide to commend him and ſet him off with new Inventions, and cauſes us to err by his lies, as it is ſaid of the falſe Prophets, *Jer.* 23. But evil 'tis ſtill, not only void of all good, but the very deformity and debaſement of the Soul defacing in it the Divine Image of its Maker, and impreſſing on it the vile Image of Satan; and then further, is attended with ſhame and ſorrow, even at the very beſt, 'tis a ſowing of the wind, no ſolid good in it, and withal a reaping of the Whirlwind, vexations and horrors: they that know it in the ſenſe of this after-view attended with the wrath of an offended God, ask them what they think of it, if they would not in thoſe thoughts rather chuſe any trouble or pain tho great, than willingly to adventure on the ways of ſin.

Obedience is that good, that beauty and comelineſs of the Soul, that conformity with the holy will of God, that hath peace and ſweetneſs in it, the hardeſt of it truly delightful even in preſent, and hereafter fully. Would we learn to conſider it thus, to know ſin to be the greateſt Evil, and the holy will of God the higheſt good, it would be eaſie to perſwade and prevail much in this, to eſchew the one, and do the other.

Theſe do not only reach the actions, but require an intrinſecal

intrinſecal averſion of the heart from ſin, and propeſionn to holineſs and love of it.

Eſchew.] The very motion and bias of the Soul turn'd from ſin, and carried towards God; and this is principally to be conſidered by us, and enquir'd after within us, an abhorrence of ſin, as the Scripture ſpeaks, not ſimple forbearing, but hating and loathing it, and this ſpringing from the love of God. Ye that love the Lord, hate Evil, you will do ſo, cannot chooſe but do ſo, and ſo know that Love to him to be upright and true.

And where this is, the avoidance of ſin, and walking in holineſs, doing good, will be, 1. More conſtant, not wavering with the variation of outwards, of occaſion, or ſociety, or ſecrecy, but going on in its natural courſe, as the Sun is as far from the earth, and goes as faſt under a cloud as when 'tis in our ſight, and goes cheerfully, becauſe from a natural principle, *rejoyceth as a ſtrong Man to run, Pſal.* 19. thus the obedience of a renewed Mind. And, 2. More Univerſal, *viz.* of all ſin; as natural antipathies are againſt the whole kind of any thing. 3. More exact, keeping a far off from the very appearances of ſin, and from all the inducements, and ſteps towards it, and this is the true way of eſchewing it.

Not a little time of conſtrain'd forbearance during a night, or the day of participating of the Communion, or a little time before them, and ſome few days after them, for thus with the moſt ſin is not diſpoſſeſs'd and caſt out, but retires inward and lurks in the heart; being beſet with thoſe Ordinances knows they laſt but a while, and therefore it gets into its ſtrength, and keeps cloſe there, till thoſe be out of ſight and diſappear again, and be a good way off, that it thinks it ſelf

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out of their danger, a good many days paſt, and then it comes forth, and returns to act it ſelf, with liberty and with more vigour, as it were to regain the time it hath been forced to loſe and lie idle in.

They again miſs in the right of this *eſchewing*, that think themſelves poſſibly ſome Body in it, in that they do avoid the groſs ſins wherein the vulgar ſort of ſinners wallow, or do eſchew ſuch evils as they have little or no inclination of nature to; but where the heart ſtands againſt ſin, as a breach of God's Law, and an offence againſt His Majeſty, as *Joſeph*, *ſhall I do this evil and ſin againſt God*? there it will carry againſt all kind of ſin, the moſt refined, and the moſt beloved ſin, wherein the Truth of this averſion is moſt try'd and approv'd; as they that have a ſtrong natural diſlike of ſome kind of meat, dreſs it as you will, and mingle it with what they love beſt, yet will not willingly eat of it, and if they be ſurpriz'd and deceiv'd ſome way to ſwallow ſome of it, yet they will find it after, and be reſtleſs till they have vomited it up again. Thus is it with the heart, that hath that inward contrariety to ſin wrought in it by a new Nature, no reconcilement with it, nor with any kind of it, as thoſe deadly Feuds that were againſt whole Families, and Names without exception. *No fellowſhip with the unfruitful works of darkneſs*, as the Apoſtle ſpeaks, for *what agreement betwixt light and darkneſs*: And this hatred of ſin, works moſt againſt ſin in a Man's ſelf, as in things we abhor, our reluctance riſes moſt where they are neareſt us: a Godly Man hates ſin in others, as hateful, whereſoever 'tis found, but becauſe 'tis neareſt him in himſelf, he hates it moſt there. They, who by their nature and breading are ſomew hat delicate, like not to ſee any thing uncleanly any where, but leaſt in their own

House, and upon their own Cloaths or skin. This makes the Goldly Man indeed fly not only the Society of Evil Men, but from himself, goes out of his old self; and till this be done, a Man does not indeed fly sin; but carries it still with him as an evil Companion or an evil Guide rather, that misleads him still from the Paths of Life. And there is much, first in the true discovery, and then the through disunion of the heart from that sin, which is most of all a Man's self; that from which he can hardliest escape, that besets him most, and lieth in his way on all hands, hath him at every turn, to disengage and get free from that, to eschew that evil. And the task in this is the harder, if this evil be as oftentimes it may be, not some gross one, but more subtile, that is less seen, and therefore not so easily avoided; but for this an impartial search must be used, if it be amongst those things that seem most necessary, and that cannot be wanting, an Idol hid amongst the stuff, yet thence must it be drawn forth and cast out.

Nondum te deseruisti.

εὐπερίστατος. *Heb.* 12. 1.

The right eschewing of evil is a wary avoidance of all occasions and beginnings of it, *fly from sin* (says the Wiseman) *as from a Serpent*, not to be tampering with it, and coming near it, and thinking to charm it, for who will not laugh at the Charmer that is bit with a Serpent, as he says, he that thinks he hath power and skill to handle it without danger; let him observe *Solomon*'s advice concerning the strange Woman, he says, not only *go not into her House*, but *remove thy way far from her, and come not near the Door of her House*: So teaches he wisely for the avoiding that other sin near to it, *look not on the Wine when 'tis red in the Cup.* They that are bold and adventurous are often wounded: thus he that removeth Stones shall be hurt thereby. If we know our

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own weakneſs, and the ſtrength of ſin, we will fear to expoſe our ſelves to hazards, and even abridge our ſelves of ſome things lawful when they prove dangerous, for he that will do always all he lawfully may, ſhall often do ſomething that lawfully he may not.

Thus for the other, [*doing of good.*] The main is to be inwardly principled for it, a heart ſtampt with the love of God and his Commandments, for conſcience of his Will, and Love to him, and deſire of his Glory to do all; a good action, even the beſt kind of actions, in an evil hand and from an evil unſanctified heart paſſes amongſt evils. *Delight in the Lord and his ways.* David's, *Oh! how I love thy Law*, can tell that he eſteems it above the richeſt and pleaſanteſt things on Earth: but how much he eſteems and loves it, he cannot expreſs.

And upon this will follow, as in the former, a conſtant tract and courſe of obedience, even contrary to the ſtream of wickedneſs about a man, and the bent of his own corrupt heart within him moving againſt all, a ſerious deſire and endeavour after all good within our calling and reach; but eſpecially that particular good of our calling, that which is in our hand, and is peculiarly requir'd of us. For in this ſome deceive themſelves, look upon ſuch a condition as they imagin were for them, or ſuch as is in their eye when they look upon others, and think if they were ſuch, and had ſuch place, and ſuch power and opportunities, they would do great matters, and in the mean time neglect that good to which they are called, and have in ſome meaſure power and place to do; this is the roving ſickly humour of our minds, and ſpeaks their weakneſs, as ſick perſons, that would ſtill change their Bed, or Poſture, or place of Abode, thinking to be better: but

a ſtaid mind applies it ſelf to its own ſtation, and ſeeks to glorifie him that ſet it there, reverencing his Wiſdom in diſpoſing of it ſo: and there is certainty of a a bleſſed approbation of this be it never ſo low, 'tis not the high condition, but much fidelity, cures it, *thou haſt been faithful in little.* We muſt care not only to anſwer occaſions when they call, but to catch at them, and ſeek them out, yea to frame occaſions of doing good, whether in the Lord's immediate Service delighting in that, private and publick, or to Men, in aſſiſting one with our means, another with our admonitions, another with counſel or comfort as we can; labouring not only to have ſomething of that good that is moſt contrary to our Nature, but even to be eminent in that, ſetting Chriſtian reſolution, and both the example and ſtrength of our Lord againſt all oppoſitions and difficulties, and diſcouragements. *Looking unto*
Heb. 12. 2. *Jeſus the Author and Finiſher of our Faith*, &c.

We ſee our rule, and 'tis the rule of peace and happineſs; what hinders but we apply our hearts to it, this is our work, and ſetting aſide the advantage that follows, conſider the thing in it ſelf. 1. The oppoſition of Sin and Obedience under the Name of *evil*, and *good*. 2. The Compoſition of our rule in theſe *Eſchew* and *do*. Conſider it thus *evil* and *good* and it will perſwade us to *eſchew* and *do*.

And if perſwaded to it, then. 1. Deſire light from above, to diſcover to you what is evil, and offenſive to God in any kind, and what pleaſeth him, what is his will: for that is the rule and reaſon of good in our actions, *that ye may prove what is the good, and holy, and acceptable will of God.* And to diſcover in your ſelves what is moſt enemy, and repugnant to that will. 2. A renew'd mind to hate that evil, the cloſeſt and moſt connatural

connatural to you, and to love that good, even that is moſt contrary. 3. Strength and skill, that by another Spirit than your own you may avoid evil and do good, and reſiſt the incurſions and ſollicitings of evil, the ſlights and violences of Satan, who is both a Serpent and a Lyon; and Power againſt your own inward corruption and the fallacies of your own heart. And thus you ſhall be able for every good work, and be kept in ſuch a meaſure as ſuits your preſent eſtate, *blameleſs in Soul and Body to the coming of Jeſus Chriſt.*

Oh! but I am often entangled and plunged in Soul-evils, and often fruſtrate in my Thoughts againſt theſe evils, and aims at the good, which is my task.

And was not this *Paul*'s condition? may you not complain in his Language, and happy if with ſome meaſure of his ſenſe, happy in crying out of wretchedneſs was not this his malady, *when I would do good, evil is preſent with me.* But know once that tho' thy duty is this, to eſchew evil and do good, yet thy Salvation is ſurer founded, than on thine own good; that perfection that anſwers Juſtice and the Law is not required of thee, thou art to walk not after the fleſh, but after the Spirit, but in ſo walking, whether in a low or high meaſure, ſtill thy comfort lyeth in this, *that there is no condemnation to them that are in Chriſt Jeſus.* As the Apoſtle begins the next *Chapter* after his ſad complaints. Again conſider his thoughts in the cloſe of the ſame *Chapter*, perceiving the Work of God in him, and differencing that from the corrupt notions of himſelf, and ſo finding at once matter of heavy complaint, and yet of cheerful exultation. *O! wretched Man that I am*, and yet with the ſame Breath, *thanks to God through Chriſt Jeſus our Lord.*

So

So then mourn with him, and yet rejoyce with him, and go on with courage as he, ſtill fighting the good fight of Faith, when thou falleſt in the mire be aſham'd and humbled, yet return and waſh in the Fountain open'd, and return and beg new ſtrength to walk more ſurely, learn to truſt thy ſelf leſs and God more, and up and be doing againſt thine enemies, how tall and mighty ſoever be the Sons of *Anak*. Be of good courage, and the Lord ſhall be with thee, and ſhall ſtrengthen thy heart, and eſtabliſh thy goings.

Do not lye down to reſt upon lazy concluſions, that 'tis well enough with thee, becauſe thou art out of the common puddle of profaneneſs, but look further, to purge from all filthineſs of fleſh, and Spirit, *perfecting holineſs in the fear of God*. Do not think thy little is enough, or that thou art deſperate of attaining more, but *preſs*, preſs hard *toward the mark and prize of thy high calling*, do not think all is loſt, becauſe thou art at preſent foyled; the experienc'd Souldier knows that he hath often won the day after a fall, or a wound receiv'd, and be aſſur'd that after the ſhort combats of a Moment follows an Eternity of Triumph.

Novit ſe ſæpe viciſſe poſt ſanguinem, &c.

Let him ſeek peace and enſue it.] Omitting the many acceptations of the word *peace*, here particularly external peace with Men, I conceive, is meant, and this to be ſought; and not only ſo to be ſought, when 'tis willingly found, but to purſue and follow it, when it ſeems to fly away: but yet ſo to purſue it, as never to ſtep out of the way of holineſs, and righteouſneſs after it, and to forſake this rule that goes before it of *eſchewing evil and doing good*, yea mainly in ſo doing is peace to be ſought and purſu'd, and moſt readily to be found

and

and overtaken in that way: for *the fruit of righteouſneſs is peace.*

Conſ. 1. An unpeaceable turbulent diſpoſition is the badge of a wicked mind, *as the Raging Sea ſtill caſting up mire and dirt, Iſ.* 57. But this love of peace and in all good ways ſeeking and purſuing it, the true Character of the Children of God, who is the God of peace. True, the Ungodly, (to prevent their own juſt challenge as *Ahab*) call the friends of true Religion diſturbers, and the troublers of *Iſrael.* And this will ſtill be their impudence, but certainly they that love the welfare of *Jeruſalem*, do ſeek, and pray for, and work for peace all they can, as a chief bleſſing, and the fruitful Womb of multitudes of bleſſings.

2*dly*, Conſider then that it is a heavy judgement, the deprivement of peace, and calls for our prayers and tears to purſue it and intreat its return, to ſeek it from his hand, that is the Soveraign diſpenſer of peace and War, to ſeek to be at peace with him, and thereby good all good ſhall come unto us, and particularly this great good of outward peace in due time, and the very judgement of War ſhall in the event be turn'd into a bleſſing. We may purſue it amongſt Men, and not overtake it, uſe all good means and fall ſhort, but purſue it up as far as the Throne of grace, ſeek it by Prayer and that will overtake it, will be ſure to find it in God's hand who ſtilleth the Waves of the Sea, and the Tumults of the people. If he give quietneſs, who then can diſturb.

He that will love Life] This the attractive, *Life*, long Life and days of good, is the thing Men moſt deſire, for if evil days, then the worſe that they be long, and the ſhorteſt of ſuch ſeem too long; and if ſhort being good, this cuts off the enjoyment of that good: but theſe two compleat the good, and ſute it

to

to Men's wiſhes, length and proſperity of Life.

This here ſuppoſed that all would be happy, that all deſire it, carried to that by nature to ſeek their own good: but he that will love it, that's here, that will wiſely love it, that will take the way to it, and be true to his deſire, *muſt refrain his Tongue from Evil, and his Lips that they ſpeak no guile*; *he muſt eſchew evil and do good*; *ſeek peace and enſue it.* You deſire to ſee good days and yet hinder them by ſinful provocations, deſire good clear days, and yet Cloud them by your guiltineſs.

Thus many deſire good here, yea and confus'dly the good of the Life to come, becauſe they hear 'tis Life, and long Life, and good to be found in it, yea nothing but good: but in this is our folly, we will not love it wiſely, the face of our deſire is towards it, but in our courſe, we are rowing from it down into the dead Sea. You would all have better times, peace and plenty, and freedom from the moleſt and expence of our preſent condition, why will you not be perſwaded to ſeek it in the true way of it.

But how this? do not the Righteous often paſs their days in diſtreſs, and ſorrow, and have few and evil days, as *Jacob* ſpeaks? Yet is there a truth in this promiſe, annexing outward good things to Godlineſs, *as having the promiſes of this Life, and that which is to come*; and ſo accompliſh'd to them, when the Lord ſees it convenient and conducing to their higheſt good; but that he moſt aims at, and they themſelves do moſt deſire; and therefore if the abatement of outward good, either the length or ſweetneſs of this Life ſerve his main end and theirs better, they are agreed upon this gainful commutation of good for infinitely better.

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The Life of a godly Man tho' ſhort in compariſon of the utmoſt of Natures courſe, yet may be long in value, in re- of his activity and attainment to much ſpiritual good, they may be ſaid to live much in a little time; and they that wear out their days in folly and ſin, *diu vivunt ſed parum, i. e.* they live long but little, or as he again *non diu vixit, diu fuit. i. e.* he lived not long, but exiſted long. And the good of their days, unſeen good, ſurpaſſes all the Worlds mirth and proſperity that makes a noiſe, but is hollow within as the *crackling of thorns*, a great ſound but little heat, and quickly done, as S. *Auguſtine* ſays of *Abraham*, he had *dies bonos in Deo, licet malos in ſeculo*, Good Days in God, tho' Evil Days in his Generation. A Believer can make up an ill Day with a good God, and enjoying him, hath ſolid peace: but then that which is abiding, that length of Days and that dwelling in the Houſe of God in that length of Days, is that *which Eye hath not ſeen, nor Ear heard*, &c. *Good Days*, an Everlaſting Day, no need of the Sun nor Moon: but that Day immediately flows from firſt and increated light, the Father of Lights, his glory ſhines in it, and the Lamb is the light there- of.

Verſe 12.

12. *For the Eyes of the Lord are over the Righteous, and his Ears are open unto their Prayers: but the Face of the Lord is againſt them that do Evil.*

THe Wiſeſt Knowledge of things is to know them in their Cauſes: but there is no Knowledge of Cauſes ſo happy and uſeful, as clearly to know and firmly believe the Univerſal dependance of all things upon the firſt and higheſt Cauſe, the Cauſe of Cauſes, the Spring of Being and Goodneſs, the Wiſe and Juſt Ruler of the World.

This the Pſalmiſt, and here with him the Apoſtle, gives as the true reaſon of that truth they have averr'd in the former words, the connexion of Holyneſs and Happyneſs. If Life, and peace, and all good be in God's Hand to beſtow when it pleaſeth him, then ſure the way to it, is an obedient and regular walking, obſervance of his will; and the way of ſin is the way to ruin: *for the Eyes of the Lord are upon the righteous*, &c. *And his Face againſt them that do Evil.*

In the words there's a double oppoſition; of perſons, and of their portion. 1. Perſons. *The Righteous* and *Evil Doers.*

1. Theſe two words are uſual in the Scriptures, and particularly in the Book of Pſalms, to expreſs the Godly, and Wicked, and ſo this righteouſneſs is not abſolute

abſolute perfection or ſinleſsneſs; nor the oppoſed evil, doing every act of ſin or breach of God's Law; but the righteous be they, that are ſtudents of obedience and holyneſs, that deſire to walk as in the ſight of God, and to walk with God, as *Enoch* did; that are glad when they can any way ſerve him, and griev'd when they offend him; that feel and bewail their unrighteouſneſs, and are earneſtly breathing and advancing forward, have a ſincere and unfeigned Love to all the Commandments of God, and a diligent endeavour to obſerve them, that vehemently hate what moſt pleaſes their corrupt Nature, and love the command that croſſes it moſt; this is an imperfect kind of perfection, *Phil.* 3. 12, 15.

On the otherſide, Evil-doers, are they that commit ſin with greedineſs, that walk in it, make it their way, that live in ſin as their Element, *take pleaſure in unrighteouſneſs*, as the Apoſtle ſpeaks, their great faculty and their great delight lyes in ſin, they are skillful and cheerful Evil doers, not any one Man in all kind of ſins, that's impoſſible, there is a concatenation of ſin, and one diſpoſes and induces to another, but yet one ungodly Man is readily more vers'd in, and delighted with ſome one kind of ſin, another with ſome other, forbears none becauſe evil, and hateful to God, but as he cannot travel over the whole globe of wickedneſs, go the full circuit, he walks up and down, in his accuſtomed way of ſin. No one Mechanick is good at all Trades, nor any Man expert in all Arts: but he is an evil doer that follows the particular Trade of the ſin he hath choſen, is active, and diligent in that, and finds it ſweet. In a word, the main of this oppoſition lyeth in the bent of the affection what way it is ſet. The godly Man hates the evil he poſſibly

by tentation hath been drawn to do, and loves the good he is fruſtrate of, and having intended hath not attain'd to do: the ſinner that hath his denomination from ſin, as his courſe, hates the good that ſometimes he is forc'd to do, and loves that ſin which many times he does not, either wants occaſion and means, and ſo cannot do, or through check of an enlightened conſcience poſſibly dares not do, tho' ſo bound up from the act, as a Dog in a Chain; yet the habit, the natural inclination and deſire in him, is ſtill the ſame, the ſtrength of his affection is carried to ſin: As in the weakeſt godly Man, there is that predominant ſincerity, and deſire of holy walking, according to which he is call'd a righteous perſon, the Lord is pleas'd to give him that Name, and account him ſo being upright in Heart, tho' often failing. There is a righteouſneſs of a higher ſtrain, upon which his Salvation hangs, that is not in him, but upon him; he is cloath'd with it; but this other of ſincerity and of true and hearty (tho' imperfect) obedience is the righteouſneſs here meant oppos'd to evil doing.

2*dly*, Their oppoſite condition or portion is expreſs'd in the higheſt notion of it, that wherein the very being of happineſs and miſery lyeth, the favour and anger of God. As their natures differ moſt, by the habitude of their affection towards God as their main diſtinguiſhing character, ſo the differences of their eſtate conſiſts in the point of his affection towards them, ſpoke here in our language by the divers aſpects of his countenance, for that our love and hate uſually look's out, and ſhews it ſelf that way.

Now for the other word expreſſing his favour to the righteous, by the openneſs of his Ear, the oppoſition in the other needed not, for either the wicked

pray

pray not, or if they do, 'tis indeed no Prayer, the Lord doth not account nor receive it as ſuch; and if his face be ſet againſt them, certainly his ear is ſhut againſt them too, and ſo ſhut that it openeth not to their loudeſt Prayer, *Tho they cry in mine ears with a loud voice, yet will I not hear them, ſayes the Lord.* Ezek 8. 18.

And before we paſs to the particulars of their condition, as here we have them, this we would conſider a little, and apply it to our preſent buſineſs; what are theſe Perſons the Lord thus regards, and opens his ear to their Prayer?

This we pretend to be ſeeking after, that the Lord would look favourably upon us, and hearken to our Suits, for our ſelves, and this Land, and the whole Church of God within theſe Kingdomes. Indeed *the fervent Prayer of a faithful man availeth much,* [πολὺ ἰσχύει] 'tis of great ſtrength, a mighty thing, that can bind and looſe the influences of Heaven, as there is inſtanc'd, and the Prayer of a Righteous Man, be it but of one Righteous Man, how much the combined cries of many of them together. And that we judge not the Righteouſneſs there and here mention'd, a thing above human eſtate, *Elias*, ſayes the Apoſtle, *was a man, and a man ſubject to like paſſions as we are*, and yet ſuch a righteous Perſon as the Lord had an eye and gave ear to in ſo great a matter, but where are thoſe righteous faſters and prayers in great Congregations? How few, if any, to be found, that are but ſuch in the loweſt ſenſe and meaſure, real Lovers and Inquirers after holineſs? What are our meetings here, but Aſſemblies of Evil doers, rebellious Children, ignorant and prophane Perſons, or dead formal Profeſſors, and ſo the more of us the worſe, incenſing the Lord more, and the multitude of Prayers, tho we could and would continue many.

Is. 1. ny days, all to no purpoſe, from ſuch as we: *Though ye make many prayers, when ye multiply prayer, I will not hear: And when ye ſpread forth your hands, I will hide mine eyes from you*; your hands ſo filthy that if you would follow me to lay hold on me with them, you drive me further off, as one with foul hands following a Perſon that is neat to catch hold of him; and *if you ſpread them out before me*, my eyes are pure, you will make me turn away, I cannot endure to look upon them, *I will hide mine eyes from you*. And faſting added with prayer will not do it, not make it paſs, *when they faſt, I will not hear their cry*, Jer. 14

'Tis the ſin of his People that provokes him inſtead of favourable looking on them to have his eyes upon them for evil and not for good, as he threatens; and therefore without puting way of that, prayer is loſt breath, doth no good.

They that retain ſtill their ſins, will not hearken to his voice, how can they expect, but that juſtly threatned retaliation, *Prov.* 1. and that the Lord in holy ſcorn in the day of their diſtreſs ſhould ſend them for help and comfort to theſe things they have made their Gods, have preferr'd before him in their trouble: *They will ſay ariſe and ſave us, but where are the Gods that thou haſt made thee, let them ariſe if they can ſave thee in the time of thy trouble*, Jer. 2. 28.

And not only do fouler Impieties thus diſappoint our prayers; but the lodging of any ſin in our affection, *if I regard iniquity in my heart* (ſays the Pſalmiſt) *the Lord will not hear my voice; if I ſee iniquity*, the word is, if mine eye look pleaſantly upon it, his will not look ſo upon me, nor ſhall I find his ear ſo ready and open: Says not, if I do ſin, but if I regard it in my heart. The heart entertaining and embracing

embracing a ſin, be it a leſſer ſin, is more than the ſimple falling into ſin, and as the ungodly do for this reaſon loſe all their prayers, a godly man may ſuffer this way, in ſome degree, upon ſome degree of guiltineſs, this way the heart ſeduc'd, it may be, and entangled for a time by ſome ſinful luſt, they are ſure to find a ſtop in their prayers, that they neither go nor come ſo quickly, and ſo comfortably as before. Any ſinful humor, as rheums do our voice, binds up the voice of prayer, makes it not ſo clear and ſhrill as it was wont; and the accuſing guilt of it aſcending ſhuts up the Lord's ear, that he doth not ſo readily hear and anſwer as before: and thus that ſweet correſpondence is prejudged, which all the delights of the World cannot compenſate.

If then you would have eaſie and ſweet acceſſes ſeek 1. an holy Heart, entertain a conſtant care and ſtudy of Holineſs, admit no parlee with ſin, do not ſo much as hearken to it, if you would be readily heard.

2. Seek a broken heart, the Lord is ever at hand to that, 'tis in the ſame *Pſalm*, *he is nigh to them that are of a contrite ſpirit*, &c. 'tis an excellent way to prevail. The breaking of the heart multiplies petitioners, every piece of it hath a Voice, and a very ſtrong and very moving Voice, that enters his Ear, and ſtirs the Bowels and Compaſſions of the Lord towards it.

3. A humble heart that may preſent its ſuites always, the Court is conſtantly there, even within it, the Great King loves to make his Abode and Reſidence in it, *Iſ.* 57. 15. This is the thing that the Lord ſo delights in and requires, he will not fail to accept of it, 'tis his choice, Mic 6. *Wherewith ſhall I come*, &c. *He hath ſhowed thee O man what is good; and what doth the Lord require of thee but to do juſtly, and love mercy*. There's this righteouſneſs, and that as a great part making it

up

up *to walk humbly with thy God*; in the Original, *humble to walk with thy God*, he cannot agree with a proud heart, he hates and reſiſts it, and two cannot walk together unleſs they be agreed, as the Wiſe man ſpeaks. The humble heart only company for God, hath liberty to walk and converſe with him, he gives Grace to the humble, he bows his ear, if thou lift not up thy neck: proud Beggers he turns away with diſdain, and the humbleſt Suiters always ſpeed beſt with him. Righteous, not ſuch in their own eyes, but in his, through his gracious dignation and acceptance; and is there not reaſon to come humbly before him, baſe Worms to to the moſt holy and moſt high God?

The Eyes of the Lord.] We ſee 1. That both are in his ſight the righteous and the wicked, all of them, and all their ways, his eye is on the one, and his face on the other, as the word is, but ſo on theſe as againſt them, 'tis therefore render'd his Eye of Knowledge and of Obſervance, marking them and their Actions equally upon both. No darkneſs nor ſhadow of death where the workers of iniquity may hide themſelves, fooliſhly and wretchedly done to do that, or think that, that we would hide from the Lord, and then to think that we can hide it; the Prophet ſpeaks wo to ſuch. *Wo to*
Iſ. 29. 15. *them that dig deep to hide their counſel from the Lord, and their works are in the dark, and they ſay, who ſeeth us? and who knoweth us?* And this is the grand principle of all wickedneſs, not (it may be) expreſly ſtated, but ſecretly lying in the Soul, an habitual forgetting of God and his eye, not conſidering that he beholds us, *ye that forget God*, ſays the *Pſalm*; thence all impiety; and on the other ſide the remembrance of his eye, a radical point of Piety and Holineſs, in which the 139 *Pſalm* is large and excellent.

But

But as the Lord doth thus equally ſee both, ſo, as his Eye and Countenance imports his mind concerning them, and towards them, the manner of beholding them is different, yea contrary. And from the other beholding in common, knowing their ways, ariſes this different beholding, which (as uſually words of Senſe ſignifie alſo the affection) is the approving and diſlike the loving and hating them, and their ways: ſo he peculiarly knows the righteous and their ways, *Pſ.* 1. And knows not, never knew the workers of iniquity, even thoſe that by their profeſſion would plead moſt acquaintance, and familiar converſe, eating and drinking in his preſence, and yet *I know you not, whence are you?* 'Tis not a breaking off from former acquaintance; no, he doth not that, diſavows none ever truly acquainted with him, ſo the other Evangeliſt hath it of thoſe that thought to have been in no ſmall account, *I never knew you, depart from me*, and there's the convincing reaſon in that *ye Workers of Iniquity*; none of his favourites and friends ſuch. *Verba ſenſus connotant affectus.*

Thus here, his Eye, his gracious Eye for good, is on the Righteous; and his Face, his angry looks, his juſt wrath againſt evil-doers.

In the 11*th. Pſalm* we have this, much after the ſame way, expreſs'd. *Firſt*, that we ſpoke of his knowing and beholding in common, the righteous and wicked, and their ways, ſitting high where he may mark, and ſeeing clear throughout all places and all hearts, *his Throne is in Heaven, his Eyes behold, his Eye lids try the Children of Men.* Sits in Heaven not as in a Chair of reſt, regardleſs of humane things, but on a Throne for governing and judging, tho' with as little uneaſineſs and diſturbance, as if there were nothing to be done that way. *His Eyes behold,* not in a fruitleſs *Ver.* 4.

contemplation or Knowledge; but *his Eye lids try*, which ſignifies an intent inſpection, ſuch as Men uſually make with a kind of motion of their Eye lids. Then upon this is added the different portion of the righteous and wicked, in his beholding them and dealing with them, he *tryes the righteous*, approves what is good in them, and by tryal and affliction doth purge out what is evil, and in both theſe, is love; *but the wicked, and him that loveth violence his Soul, hateth*, and therefore, as here, his face is againſt them, his Soul and face all one, but theſe things are expreſs'd after our manner, he looks upon them with indignation, and thence come the Storms in the next Verſe, *ſnares rained down*, the warieſt foot cannot avoid ſuch ſnares, they come down upon them from above, *fire, and brimſtone, and burning tempeſt*, alluding to *Sodom*'s judgment, as an emblem of the puniſhment of all the Wicked: *This is the portion of their Cup.* There's a Cup for them but his Children drink not with them; they have another Cup, the Lord himſelf is the portion of their Cup, *Pſal.* 16. His Favour, as cloſes *Pſ.* 11. *the righteous Lord loveth righteouſneſs, his countenance doth behold the upright*, that's another beholding than the former, gracious, loving beholding, as here, *his eyes upon the Righteous.*

Ver. 5.

Ver. 6.

Ver. 7.

Now the perſwaſion of this Truth is the main eſtabliſhment of a godly mind, amidſt all the preſent confuſions that appear in things, and 'tis ſo here intended, and in the Pſalm, and throughout the Scriptures.

To look upon the preſent flouriſhing and proſperity of Evil doers, and diſtreſſes and ſorrows of the Godly, is a dark obſcure matter in it ſelf: but the way to be cleared and comforted, is to look above them to the Lord, *they look'd unto him and were lightned, Pſal.* 34. 5. that anſwers

ſwers all doubts to believe this undoubted providence and juſtice, the Eye of God that ſees all, yea rules all theſe things: and in the midſt of all the painted happineſs of Wicked Men this is enough to make them miſerable, the Lord's Face is againſt them, and they ſhall ſurely find it ſo, he hath wrath and judgement in ſtore, and will bring it forth to light, will execute it in due time, he is preparing for them, that cup ſpoke of, and they ſhall drink it: ſo in the ſaddeſt condition of his Church and a believing Soul, to know this, that the Lord's eye is even then upon them, and that he is upon thoughts of peace, and love to them, is that which ſettles and compoſes the mind. Thus in that *Pſalm* before cited, it was ſuch difficulties that did drive *David*'s thoughts to that for ſatisfaction, *if the Foundations be deſtroy'd, what can the righteous do?* in the time of ſuch great ſhakings and confuſions, the righteous Man can do nothing to't, but the righteous Lord can do enough, he can do all, *the righteous Lord that loveth righteouſneſs*, while all ſeems to go upſide down, he is on his Throne, he is trying and judging, and will appear to be Judge. This is the thing that a faithful Soul ſhould learn to look to, and not loſe view and firm belief of, and deſire the Lord himſelf to raiſe their minds to it, when they are like to ſink. Natural ſtrength and reſolution will not ſerve turn, floods may come that will ariſe above that, ſomething above a man's own muſt ſupport him: Therefore ſay with *David*, *when my Spirit is overwhelm'd, lead me to the Rock that is higher than I.* They think ſometimes 'tis ſo hard with them, he regards not, but he aſſures them the contrary, *Iſ.* 49. *I have graven thee upon the palms of mine hands.* I cannot look upon my own hands, but I muſt remember thee: *and thy walls are continually*

before me, this is that the Spouſe ſeeks for, *ſet me as a Seal upon thine Arm*, Cant. 8.

Now a little more particularly to conſider the Expreſſions and their Scope here, how is it made good that the former words teach, that they that walk in the ways of wickedneſs can expect no good, are certainly miſerable? Thus, *the face of the Lord is againſt them*: Proſper they may in their Affairs and Eſtates, may have Riches, and Poſterity, and Friends, and the World careſſing them, and ſmiling on them on all hands, but there is that one thing that damps all, *the Face of the Lord is againſt them*, this they feel not indeed for the time, 'tis an inviſible ill, out of ſight and out of mind with them: but there is a time of the appearing of this Face of the Lord againſt them, *the revelation of his juſt Judgment*, as the Apoſtle ſpeaks, ſometimes precurſory days of it here, but however one great prefixed day, a day of darkneſs to them indeed, wherein they ſhall know what this is, that now ſounds ſo light, to have the Face of the Lord againſt them, a look of it more terrible than all preſent miſeries combined together, what then ſhall the Eternity of it be? *to be puniſhed* (as the Apoſtle ſpeaks) *with everlaſting deſtruction from the preſence of the Lord, and the glory of his Power.*

Are we not then impertinent fooliſh Creatures, that are ſo thoughtful how our poor buſineſſes here ſucceed with us, and how we are accounted of in the World, and how the faces of men are towards us, and ſcarce ever enter into a ſecret ſerious enquiry, how the countenance of God is to us, whether favourably ſhining on us or ſtill angrily ſet againſt us, as it is againſt all impenitent ſinners.

The Face of the Soul being towards God, turn'd away from the World and Sin, argues to it, that his Face is

not

not againſt it, but that he hath graciouſly look'd upon it, and by a look of love hath drawn it towards himſelf, for we act not firſt in that, *non amatur Deus niſi de Deo*, 'tis he that prevents us, and by the beam of his, kindles love in our hearts. Now the Soul that's thus ſet towards him, it may be, doth not conſtantly ſee here his face ſhining full and clear upon it: but often clouded, it may be, hath not not yet at all ſeen it ſenſibly, yet this it may conclude, ſeeing my deſires are toward him, and my chief deſire is the ſweet light of his countenance, though as yet I find not his face ſhining on me, yet I am perſwaded it is not ſet againſt me to deſtroy me. Misbelief, when the Soul is much under, and diſtemper'd, may ſuggeſt this ſometimes too: but yet ſtill there is ſome ſpark of hope that it is otherwiſe, and that the eye of the Lord's pity is even in that eſtate upon us, and will in time manifeſt it ſelf to be ſo.

To the other, what aſſurance have the Godly, for that ſeeing of good, theſe bleſſings you ſpeak of? This, *the Eyes of the Lord are upon them, and his Ears open to their prayer*, if you think him wiſe enough to know what is good for them, and rich enough to afford it, they are ſure of one thing, he loves them, they have his good will, his heart is towards them and therefore his Eye, and his Ear; can they then want any good? If many Days, and outward good things be indeed good for them, they cannot miſs of theſe, he hath given them already much better things than theſe come to, and hath yet far better in in ſtore for them, and what way ſoever the World go with them, this it ſelf is happineſs enough, that they are in his love, *whoſe loving kindneſs is better than Life*, ſweet days have they that live in it, what better

days

days would a Courtier wiſh, than to be ſtill in the eye and favour of the King, to be certain of his good will towards them, and to know of acceſs, and of a gracious acceptance of all their Suits: Now thus it is with all the Servants of the great King, without prejudice one to another, he is ready to receive their Requeſts, and able and willing to do them all good. Happy eſtate of a Believer, he muſt not account himſelf poor and deſtitute in any condition, for he hath favour at Court, he hath the Kings eye and his ear, *the eyes of the Lord are upon him, and his ears open to his prayers.*

The Eyes.] This hath in it, 1. His love, the propenſion of his heart towards them: The Eye is the ſervant of the affection, turns readily that way moſt, where the heart is: Therefore thus the Lord is pleaſed to ſpeak of his love to his own, he views ſtill all the world, but he looks upon them with a peculiar delight, his eye ſtill on them, as it were towards them from all the reſt of the world, tho he doth not alwaies let them ſee theſe his looks, for 'tis not ſaid, they alwayes are in ſight of it, no, not here, yet ſtill his Eye is indeed upon them, by the beauty of Grace in them, his own work indeed, the beauty that he himſelf hath put upon them: And ſo the other of his Ear too, he is willing to do for them what they ask, he loves even to hear them ſpeak, finds a ſweetneſs in the voice of their Prayers, that makes his ear not only open to their Prayers, but deſirous of them as ſweet Muſick. Thus he ſpeaks of both, *Cant.* 2. 14. *My dove let me ſee thy countenance, let me hear thy voice, for ſweet is thy voice, and thy countenance is comely.*

2. His good Providence and readineſs to do them good, to ſupply their wants, and order their affairs for them

them, to anſwer their deſires, and thus to let them find the fruits of that love that ſo leads his eye and ear towards them, his eye is upon them, he is deviſing and thinking what to do for them, 'tis the thing he thinks on moſt: his eyes are on all, but they are buſied, as he is pleaſed to expreſs it, *they run to and fro through the earth, to ſhew himſelf ſtrong in behalf of them, whoſe heart is perfect towards him*, &c. 2 Chron. 16. 9. ſo Deut. 11. 12 *his Eyes all the year on the land*. And no wonder then he anſwers their Suits in what is good for them, when it is ſtill in his thoughts before, he prevents. they cannot be ſo mindful of themſelves, as he is of them.

This is an unſpeakable Comfort, when a poor Believer is in great perplexity of any kind in his outward or ſpiritual condition. Well, I ſee no way, I am blind in this, but there are eyes upon me that ſee well what is beſt, the Lord is minding me, and bringing about all to my advantage; I am poor and needy indeed, but the Lord thinketh on me, that caſteth the ballance. Would not a man, tho he had nothing, think himſelf happy, if ſome great Prince were buſily thinking how to advance and inrich him; much more, if a number of Kings were upon this thought, and deviſing together, yet *theſe thoughts might periſh*, as the Pſalmiſt ſpeaks? how much ſolider happineſs is it to have him, whoſe power is greateſt, and whoſe thoughts fail not eying thee, and deviſing thy good, and asking us as it were, *What ſhall be done to the man whom the King will honour?*

And his Ears.] What ſuits thou haſt, thou mayſt ſpeak freely, he will not refuſe thee any thing that is for thy good.

O! but I am not righteous, and all this is for them only: yet thou wouldſt be ſuch a one; wouldſt thou indeed? then in part thou art, as he modeſtly and wiſely chang'd the

the name of Wiſemen into Philoſophers, art thou not righteous, yet (φιλοδίκαιος) a Lover of Righteouſneſs thou art, then one of theſe: but if ſtill thine own unrighteouſneſs be in thine eye, it may and ſhould be ſo to humble thee, but if it ſhould ſcare thee from coming unto God, and offering thy ſuits with this perſwaſion that his ear is open, make thee think that his favourable eye is not toward thee, yet there is mercy, creep in under the Robe of his Son, thou art ſure he is *Jeſus Chriſt the righteous*, and that the Father's eye is on him with delight, and then it ſhall be ſo on thee being in him, and put thy petitions into his hand, that is Great Maſter of Requeſts, thou canſt not doubt that he hath acceſs, and that ear open which thou thinkeſt ſhut to thee.

The Exerciſe of Prayer being ſo important, and bearing ſo great a part in the life and comfort of a Chriſtian, it deſerves to be very ſeriouſly conſidered. We will therefore ſubjoyn ſome few Conſiderations concerning it.

1. Prayer is conſiderable in a threefold Notion. 1. As a duty we owe to God, being he from whom we expect and receive all; 'tis a very reaſonable homage and acknowledgement thus to teſtify the dependance of our Being and Life on him, and the dependance of our Souls upon him, for Being, and Life, and all good, that we be daily Suiters before his Throne, and go to him for all. 2. As the Dignity, and the delight of a ſpiritual Mind, to have ſo near acceſs unto God, and ſuch liberty to ſpeak to him. 3. As a proper and ſure means by Divine Appointment and Promiſe of obtaining at the hands of God thoſe good things that are needful and convenient for us. And altho ſome Believers of lower Knowledge, do not (it may be) ſo diſtinctly know

know, and others, not ſo particularly conſider all theſe in it, yet there is a latent Notion of all theſe in the heart of every Godly Perſon, that ſtirs them and puts them on to the conſtant uſe of prayer, and to a love of it.

And as they are in theſe reſpects inclin'd, and bent to the exerciſe of prayer, the Lord's ear is in like manner inclin'd to hear their prayer in theſe reſpects. 1. He takes it well at their hands, that they do offer it up as due worſhip to him, that they deſire thus, as they can to ſerve him, accepts of thoſe offerings graciouſly, paſſes by the imperfections in them, and hath regard to their ſincere intention and deſire. 2. It pleaſes him well, that they delight in Prayer, as converſe with him, that they love to be much with him, and to ſpeak to him often, and ſtill aſpire by this way to more acquaintance with him, that they are ambitious of this. 3. He willingly hears their prayers as the Expreſſions of their Neceſſities and Deſires, being both rich and bountiful, loves to have bleſſings drawn out of his hands that way, as full breaſts delight to be drawn; the Lord's Treaſure always full, and therefore always Communicative. In the firſt reſpect, prayer is acceptable to the Lord as Incenſe and Sacrifice, as *David* deſires, the Lord receives it as Divine Worſhip done to him. In the ſecond, prayer is as the Viſits and ſweet Entertainment, and Diſcourſe of Friends together, and ſo pleaſing to the Lord, the free opening of the mind, *pouring out of the heart to him*, as 'tis called in the *Pſalm*, and ſo done, calls it his Words and his Meditation, and the Word for that ſignifies Diſcourſe or Conference. And in the third ſenſe he receives prayer as the ſuites of petitioners that are in favour with him, and that he readily accords to. And thus the words for

Supplication in the Original, and the word here for *Prayer*, and that for *Cry* in the *Pſalm*, do mean, and in that ſenſe the Lord's open ear, and hearkning hath in it his readineſs to anſwer, as one that doth hear, and to anſwer graciouſly and really, as hearing favourably.

Some directions, 1. For Prayer, that it may be accepted and anſwered. 2. For obſerving the anſwers of it.

1. For Prayer the qualification of the Heart that offers it. 2. The way of offering it.

The Heart, 1. In ſome meaſure a holy Heart according to that here, *the Righteous*, no regarding iniquity, entertaining of friendſhip with any ſin, but a permanent ove and deſire of Holineſs. Thus indeed a man prays within himſelf, as in a ſanctified Place, whither the Lord's ear inclines as of old to the Temple, need not run ſuperſtitiouſly to a Church, *&c. intra te ora, ſed vide prius an ſis templum Dei.* The ſanctified Man's Body is the *Temple of the holy Ghoſt*, as the Apoſtle ſpeaks, and his Soul the Prieſt in it, that offers ſacrifice both holy to the Lord, conſecrated to him, a believing Heart, no praying without this. Faith the very life of Prayer, whence ſprings Hope and Comfort with it, to uphold the Soul, and keep it ſteady under ſtorms with the promiſes, and as *Aaron* and *Hur* to *Moſes*, keeping it from fainting, ſtrengthening the hands when they would begin to fail, that word, *Pſal.* 10. 17. for the *preparing of the heart* which God gives as an aſſurance and pledge of his inclining his ear to hear, ſignifies the eſtabliſhing of the Heart, that indeed is a main point of its preparedneſs, and due diſpoſition for Prayer. Now this is done by Faith, without which the Soul, as the Apoſtle St. *James* ſpeaks, is a rolling unquiet thing,

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as a Wave of the Sea, of it ſelf unſtable as the Waters, and then driven with the Wind and toſſed too and fro with every tentation; ſee and feel thine own unworthineſs as much as thou canſt, for thou art never bid believe in thy ſelf, no, but countermanded that as Faith's great Enemy, but what hath thy unworthineſs to ſay againſt free promiſes of Grace which are the baſis of thy Faith, ſo then believe that that you may pray, this is *David*'s advice, *Pſ.* 62. *Truſt in him at all times ye people*, and then *pour out your hearts before him*, confide in him as a moſt faithful and powerful Friend, and than you will open your hearts to him.

2. For the way of offering up prayer 'tis a great art, a main part of the ſecret of Religion to be skill'd in it, and of great concern for the comfort and ſucceſs of it, much here to be conſidered, but for the preſent briefly. 1. Offer not to ſpeak to him without the heart in ſome meaſure ſeaſon'd and prepoſſeſs'd with the ſenſe of his Greatneſs and Holineſs, and there is much in this, conſidering wiſely to whom we ſpeak, the King, *the Lord of Glory*, and ſetting the Soul before him, in his preſence, and then reflecting on our ſelves, and ſeeing what we are, how wretched, and baſe, and filthy, and unworthy of ſuch acceſs to ſuch a Great Majeſty, the want of this preparing of the heart to ſpeak in the Lord's ear, by the conſideration of God and our ſelves is that which fills the exerciſe of prayer with much guiltineſs, makes the heart careleſs, and ſlight, and irreverent, and ſo diſpleaſes the Lord, and diſappoints our ſelves of that comfort in prayer, and anſwers of it, that otherwiſe we would have more experience of. We ruſh in before him with any thing, provided we can tumble out a few words, and do not weigh theſe things, and compoſe our hearts with ſerious thoughts and conceptions

tions of God. The Soul that ſtudies and endeavours this moſt, hath much to do to attain to any right apprehenſions of him, for how little know we of him; yet ſhould we at leaſt, ſet our ſelves before him as the pureſt and greateſt Spirit, a Being infinitely more Excellent than our Minds or any Creature can conceive, this would fill the Soul with awe and reverence, and balaſt it, make it go more even through the exerciſe, to conſider the Lord as that Prophet ſaw him, ſitting on his Throne, and all the Hoſt of Heaven ſtanding by him on his right Hand, and on his left, and thy ſelf a defiled Sinner coming before him, *as a vile Frog creeping out of ſome Pool*; how would this fill thee with holy Fear. Oh! His greatneſs, and our baſeneſs, and Oh! the diſtance. This is *Solomon's* advice, *be not raſh with thy mouth, and let not thy heart be haſty to utter any thing before God, for God is in Heaven and thou upon Earth, therefore let thy words be few.* This would keep us from our ordinary bablings, that heart nonſenſe, tho' the words be ſenſe, yet through the inattention of the heart, are but as impertinent confus'd Dreams in the Lord's ears, as there follows, *v.* 3.

Velut e palude ſuâ vilis ranuncula. Bern.

Eccl. 5. 2.

2. When thou addreſſeſt thy ſelf to prayer, deſire and depend upon the aſſiſtance and inſpiration of the holy Spirit of God, without which thou art not able truly to pray, 'tis a ſupernatural work; and therefore the principle of it muſt be ſupernatural. He that hath nothing of the Spirit of God cannot pray at all, he may howle as a Beaſt in his neceſſity or diſtreſs, or may ſpeak words of Prayer, as ſome Birds learn the Language of Men, but pray he cannot; and they that have that Spirit ought to ſeek the movings and actual workings of it in them in Prayer, the particular help of their infirmities, teaching both what to ask, a thing

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that of our ſelves we know not, and then enabling them to aſk, breathing forth their deſires in ſuch ſighs and groans, as the breath not ſimply of their own, but of God's Spirit.

3*dly*, As thoſe two before it, ſo in the exerciſe of it you ſhould learn to keep a watchful eye over your own hearts throughout, for every ſtep of the way, that they ſtart not out, by the keeping up of a continued remembrance of that preſence of God, which in the entry of the work is to be ſet before the eye of the Soul, and our endeavour ought to be, to fix it upon that view, that it turn not aſide nor downwards, but from beginning to end, keep ſight of him, who ſees and marks whether we do ſo or no. They that are moſt inſpective, and watchful in this will ſtill be faulty in it, but certainly the leſs watchful the more faulty; and this we ought to do, to be aſpiring daily to more ſtability of mind in prayer, and driving out ſomewhat of that roving and wandring, that is ſo univerſal an Evil, and certainly ſo grievous to thoſe that have it moſt, but that obſerve and diſcover it moſt, and endeavour moſt againſt it. A ſtrange thing that the mind, even the renewed mind, ſhould be ſo ready, not only at other times, but in the exerciſe of Prayer, wherein we peculiarly come ſo near to God, yet even then to ſlip out and leave him, and follow ſome poor vanity or other inſtead of him. Surely the Godly Man when he thinks on this, is exceedingly aſhamed of himſelf, cannot tell what to think of it: God his exceeding Joy, whom in his right thoughts he eſteem's ſo much above the World, and all things in it, yet to uſe him thus, when he is ſpeaking to him, to break off from that, and hold diſcourſe, or change a word with ſome baſe thought that ſteps in, and whiſpers to him, or at the beſt

beſt not to be ſtedfaſtly minding the Lord to whom he ſpeaks, and poſſeſs'd with the regard of his preſence, and of his buſineſs and errand with him.

This is no ſmall piece of our miſery here, theſe wandrings are evidence to us that we are not at home: but yet for this, tho we ſhould be humbled, and ſtill labouring againſt it, yet not ſo diſcourag'd, as to be driven from the work. Satan would deſire no better than that, it were to help him to his wiſh; and ſometimes a Chriſtian may be driven to think, what ſhall I do ſtill thus, abuſing my Lords name, and the priviledge he hath given me, I had better leave off; no, not ſo by any means, ſtrive againſt the miſerable evil in thee, but caſt not away thy happineſs, be doing ſtill. 'Tis a froward childiſh humour, when any thing agrees not to our mind, to throw all away, thou mayeſt come off with halting from thy wreſtlings, and yet obtain the Bleſſing for which thou wreſtled.

4. Thoſe Graces which are the due qualities of the heart, diſpoſing it for prayer in the exerciſe of it, ſhould be excited and acted, as Holineſs, the Love of it, the Deſire of increaſe and growth of it; ſo the humbling and melting of the heart, and chiefly Faith, which is mainly ſet on work in prayer, draw forth the ſweetneſſes and vertues of the Promiſes, to deſire earneſtly their performance to the Soul, and to believe that they ſhall be performed; to have before our eyes his Goodneſs and Faithfulneſs, who hath promiſed, and to reſt upon that, and for ſucceſs in Prayer exerciſing Faith in it, it is altogether neceſſary to interpoſe the Mediator, and look through him, and to ſpeak and petition by him, who warns us of this, that there is no other way to ſpeed, *no man cometh to the Father but by me.* As the Jews when they prayed, look'd toward the

the Temple were was the Mercy-Seat, and the peculiar preſence of God; thus ought we in all our praying to look on Chriſt, who is our *Propitiatory*, and *in whom the fullneſs of the Godhead dwells bodily*. The forgetting of this may be the cauſe of our many diſappointments. *Shechinah.*

5. Fervency, not to ſeek coldly, that preſages refuſal; fire in the Sacrifice, otherwiſe it aſcends not, no ſacrifice without incenſe, and no incenſe without fire. Our remiſs dead hearts are not likely to do much for the Church of God, nor for our ſelves, where are thoſe ſtrong cries that ſhould pierce the Heavens? his ear is open to their cry. He hears the ſainteſt coldeſt Prayer, but not with that delight and propenſeneſs to grant it, his Ear is not on't, as the word here is, he takes no pleaſure in hearing on't, but cries, heart-cries. Oh! thoſe take his Ear, and move his Bowels, for theſe are the voice, the cries of his own Children. A ſtrange word of encouragement to importunity, *give him no reſt*, *Iſ.* 62. 7. Suffer him not to be in quiet till *he make* Jeruſalem *a praiſe in the Earth*. A few ſuch Suiters in theſe times were worth thouſands ſuch as we are, our prayers ſtick in our Breaſt, ſcarce come forth, much leſs go up, and aſcend with that piercing force, that would open up the way for deliverances to come down. *Pſ.* 55. 17.

But in this muſt be ſome difference of temporal and ſpiritual things, the Prayer in the right ſtrain cannot be too fervent in any thing, but the deſire of the thing in temporals may be too earneſt, a feveriſh diſtemper'd heat which diſeaſes the Soul, therefore in theſe things, a holy indifferency concerning the particular, may, and ſhould be joyn'd with the fervency of Prayer: but in ſpiritual things, there is no danger

in vehemency of deſire, covet theſe, hunger and thirſt, be unceſſantly ardent in the ſuit; yet even in thoſe in ſome particulars, as for the degree and meaſure of Grace, and ſome peculiar furtherances they ſhould be preſented ſo with earneſtneſs, as that withal it be with a reference and reſignation of it to the Wiſdom and Love of our Father.

For the other point the anſwer of our Prayers, which is in this openneſs of the ear, it is a thing very needful to be conſidered and attended to, if we think that Prayer is indeed a thing that God takes notice of, and hath regard to in his dealing with his Children, 'tis certainly a point of Duty and Wiſdom in them to obſerve how he takes notice of it, and bends his ear to it, and puts to his hand to help, and ſo anſwers it, this both furniſhes matter of praiſe, and ſtirs up the heart to render it, therefore in the *Pſalms* ſo often *the hearing of prayer* obſerved, and recorded, and made a part of the Song of Praiſe, and withal it endears both God and Prayer unto the Soul, as we have both together, *Pſal.* 116. 1. *I love the Lord, becauſe he hath heard my voice, and my ſupplications*, the tranſpoſition in the Original pathetical, *I love, becauſe the Lord hath heard my voice.* I am in love, and particularly this cauſes it, I have found ſo much kindneſs in the Lord, I cannot but love, *he hath heard my voice.* And then it wins his eſteem and affection to Prayer, ſeeing I find this vertue in it, we ſhall never part again, *I will call upon him as long as I live*, ſeeing Prayer draweth help and favours from Heaven, I ſhall not be to ſeek for a way in any want or ſtrait that can befall me.

In this there is need of direction: but too many Rules may as much confuſe a matter as too few, and do many times perplex the mind, and multiply doubts,

doubts, as many Laws do multiply pleading. Briefly then,

1. Slothful minds do often neglect the anſwers of God, even when they are moſt legible in the very thing it ſelf granted that was deſired. It may be through a total inadvertence in this kind, never thinking on things as anſwers of our requeſts, or poſſibly a continual eager purſuit of more, turns away the mind from conſidering what it hath upon requeſt obtain'd, ſtill ſo bent upon what further we would have, that we never think what is already done for us, one of the ordinary Cauſes of ingratitude.

2. But tho' it be not in the ſame thing that we deſire, yet when the Lord changes our petitions in his anſwers, 'tis always for the better, regards (according to that known word of St. *Auguſtine*) our well more than our will. We beg deliverance, we are not unanſwered, if he give patience and ſupport, be it under a ſpiritual trial or tentation, *my grace ſufficient for thee.* And where the Lord doth thus, 'tis certainly better for the time, than the other would be. Obſerve here, his ears are to the Righteous, but his eyes are on them too, they have not ſo his ear as blindly to give them, what they ask, whether it be fit or no; but his eye is on them to ſee and conſider their eſtate, and to know better than themſelves what is beſt, and accordingly to anſwer: This is no prejudice, but a great Priviledge and Happineſs of his Children, that they have a Father that knows what is fit for them, and with-holds no good from them. And this commutation and exchange of our requeſts a Chriſtian obſerving, may uſually find out the particular anſwer of their Prayers, and if ſometimes they do not, than not to ſubtilize and amuſe themſelves ſo much in that, but rather to keep on to the exer-

Si non ad voluntatem ad utilitatem.

ciſe, knowing (as the Apoſtle ſpeaks in another caſe) this for a certain, *that their labour ſhall not be in vain in the Lord*, and as the Prophet hath it, *he hath not ſaid unto the Houſe of* Jacob, *ſeek ye me in vain.*

3. Only this we ſhould always remember not to ſet bounds and limits to the Lord in point of time, to ſet him a day, that thou wilt attend ſo long and no longer; how patiently will ſome men beſtow long attendance on others, where they expect ſome very poor good, or courteſie at their hands, but we are very brisk and haſty with him, who never delays us but for our good, to ripen thoſe Mercies for us, that we as fooliſh Children would pluck while they are green, and have neither that ſweetneſs and goodneſs in them which they ſhall have in his time. All his works are done in their ſeaſon: were there nothing to check our impatiences but his Greatneſs; and the greatneſs of thoſe things we ask for, and our own unworthineſs, theſe might curb them, and perſwade us how reaſonable it is that we wait: He is a King well worth waiting on, and there is in the very waiting on him an honour and happineſs far above us, and the things we ſeek are great, forgiveneſs of Sins, evidence of Sonſhip and Heirſhip: Heirſhip of a Kingdom, and we condemned Rebels, born Heirs of the bottomleſs Pit, and ſhall ſuch as we be in ſuch haſte with ſuch a Lord in ſo great requeſts: but the attendance that this reaſon enforces, is ſweetned by the conſideration of his Wiſdom and Love, that he hath foreſeen and choſen the very hour for each mercy fit for us, and will not ſlip it a moment. Never any yet repented their waiting, but found it fully compens'd with the opportune anſwer in ſuch a time as then they are forc'd to confeſs was the only beſt. *I waited patiently*, ſays the Pſalmiſt,

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in waiting I waited, but it was all well beſtowed, *he inclin'd to me, and heard my cry, brought me up*, &c. and then after falls into admiration of the Lord's method, his wonderful workings and thoughts to us-ward, while I was waiting, and ſaw nothing thy thoughts were towards, and for me, and thou didſt then work when thy goodneſs was moſt remarkable and wonderful.

When thou art in great affliction outward or inward, thou thinkeſt (it may be) he regards thee not, yea but he doth. Thou art his Gold, he knows the time of refining thee, and then taking thee out of the Furnace, he is verſt and skillful in that work. Thou ſayeſt, I have cried long for power againſt ſin, and for ſome evidence of pardon, and find no anſwer to either, yet leave him not, he never yet caſt away any that ſought him, and ſtaid by him, and reſolv'd whatſoever came on't, to lie at his footſtool, and to wait, were it all their life time, for a good word, or a good look from him. And they chuſe well that make that their great deſire and expectation, for one of his good words or looks will make them up, and make them happy for ever, and 'tis he is Truth, they are ſure not to miſs of it, *bleſſed are all they that wait for him.* And thou that ſay'ſt thou canſt not find pardon of ſin and power againſt it; yet conſider whence are thoſe deſires of both, that thou once didſt not care for, why doth thou hate that ſin which thou didſt love, and art troubled and burden'd with the guilt of it under which thou wenteſt ſo eaſily and didſt not feel before, are not theſe ſomething of his own work, yes ſure? and know he will not leave it unfinished, nor forſake the work of his hands, his eye may be on thee, tho thou ſeeſt him not, and his ear open to thy cry, tho for the preſent he ſpeaks not to thee as thou deſireſt. 'Tis not ſaid that his Chil-

dren always ſee and hear him ſenſibly: but yet when they do not, he is beholding them, and hearing them graciouſly, and will ſhew himſelf to them, and anſwer them ſeaſonably.

Pſal. 22. 2. *I cry in the day time, and thou heareſt not*, &c. Yet will not he entertain hard thoughts of God, nor conclude againſt him, *thou art holy*, v. 3. where by *Holineſs* is meant his faithfulneſs (I conceive) to his own, as follows, *that he inhabites the praiſes of Iſrael*, to wit for the Favours he hath ſhewed his people as *v.* 4. *Our Fathers truſted in thee.*

Clavis dici & ſera reſig.

Let the Lord's open ear perſwade us to make much uſe of it, be much in this ſweet and fruitful exerciſe of Prayer, together and apart, in the ſenſe of theſe three Conſiderations mentioned above: The Duty, the Dignity, and the Utility of Prayer. 'Tis due to the Lord to be worſhip'd and acknowledg'd thus, as the Fountain of Good. How will men crouch and bow one to another upon ſmall requeſts, and he only neglected by the moſt from whom all have all, Life, and Breath, and all Things, as the Apoſtle ſpeaks in his Sermon, *Acts* 17. 25.

2 And then the Dignity of this, to be admitted into ſo near converſe with the higheſt Majeſty, were there nothing to follow, no anſwer at all, Prayer pays it ſelf in the Excellency of its Nature, and the ſweetneſs that the Soul finds in it, poor wretched Man to be admitted into Heaven, while he is on Earth, and there to come and ſpeak his mind freely to the Lord of Heaven and Earth, as his Friend, as his Father, to empty all his Complaints into his Boſom, to refreſh his Soul in his God, wearied with the Follies and Miſeries of the World. Where any thing of his love, this is a priviledge of higheſt ſweetneſs, for they that love find much

much delight to diſcourſe together, and count all hours ſhort, and think the day runs too faſt, that is ſo ſpent and they that are much in this exerciſe the Lord doth impart his ſecrets much to them.

3. And the moſt profitable exerciſe, no loſt time as prophane hearts judge it, but only gain'd, all bleſſings attend this work, the richeſt traffick in the World, trades with Heaven and what is moſt precious there. And as Holineſs fits to Prayer, ſo Prayer befriends Holineſs, increaſes it much, nothing ſo refines and purifies the Soul as frequent Prayer, if the often converſing with Wiſe Men doth ſo teach and advance the Soul in Wiſdom, what then will the converſe of God. This makes the Soul to deſpiſe the things of the World and in a manner makes it Divine, winds up the Soul from the Earth, acquainting it with delights, that are infinitely ſweeter.

The natural heart is full ſtuff'd with prejudices againſt the way of Holineſs that diſſwade and detain it, and therefore the holy Scriptures are moſt fitly much in this point of aſſerting the true advantage of it to the Soul. And in removing thoſe miſtakes it has of that way.

Thus here, and to preſs it the more home the Apoſtle uſed the Pſalmiſts words, and *Ver.* 10. &c. and now follows it forth in his own the particular way of meekneſs and love, *&c.* But extends in the general Doctrine to all the paths of righteouſneſs.

The main concluſion is, that Happineſs is the certain conſequent, and fruit of Holineſs. All good, even outward good, ſo far as it holds good and prejudges not a higher good. If we did believe this more, we ſhould feel it more, and ſo upon feeling, and experiment, believe it more ſtrongly. All the heavy judge-

ments we feel or fear, are they not the fruit of our own ways, or prophaneneſs, and pride, and malice, and abounding ungodlineſs, all cry out of hard times, evil days, and yet who is taking the right way to better them, yea, who is not ſtill helping to make them worſe, our ſelves the greateſt enemies of our own peace. Who looks either rightly backward, reflects on his former ways, or rightly forward to direct his way better that is before him, either, ſays, *what have I done?* or *what ought I to do?* and indeed the one of theſe depends on the other, *I conſider'd my ways* (ſays *David*) turn'd them over and over (as the word is) *and then I turn'd my feet unto thy teſtimonies.*

[*Conſilium futurum ex præterito venit.* Sen.]

Are there any, for all the Judgements fallen on us, or that threatens us, returning apace with regret and hatred of ſin, haſtening unto God, and mourning and weeping as they go, bedewing each ſtep with their tears, yea, where that newneſs of Life that the word ſo long, and now the word and the rod together are ſo loud calling for? Who more reforming his Tongue from evil, and lips from guile, changing Oaths, and Lyes, and Calumnies, into a new Language, into Prayers, and reverend ſpeaking of God, and joyning a ſutable conſonant carriage, eſchewing evil and doing good, labouring to be fertile in Holineſs, to bring forth much fruit to God. This were the way to ſee good days indeed, this is the way to the longeſt Life, the only long Life, and length of Days, one eternal Day, as St. *Auguſtine* on theſe words, *one Day in thy Courts is better, than a thouſand. Millia dierum deſiderant Homines, & multum volunt hic vivere, contemnant millia dierum, deſiderent unum, qui non habet ortum & occaſum, cui non cedit heſternus, quem non urget craſtinus.*

The

The reaſon added is above all exception, 'tis ſupreme, *the eyes of the Lord*, &c. If he that made times and ſeaſons, and commands and formes them as he will, if he can give good Days, or make Men happy then the only way to it ſure muſt be the way of his obedience, to be in the conſtant favour of the great King, and ſtill in his gracious thoughts, to have his eye and his ear if this will ſerve turn, (and if this do it not, I pray you, what will?) then the righteous Man is the only happy Man, *for the eyes of the Lord are upon him.* Surer happy Days hence, than theirs that draw them from the aſpect of the Stars, the Eyes of the Father of Lights benignity beholding them, the trine aſpect of the bleſſed Trinity. The love he carries to them draws his eye ſtill towards them, no forgetting of them, nor ſlipping of the fit ſeaſon to do them good, his Mind, I may ſay, runs on that, he ſees how 'tis with them, and receives their ſuits gladly, rejoyces to put favours upon them. He is their aſſured friend, yea he is their Father, what can they want, they cannot miſs of any good that his love and power can help them to.

But his Face, &c.] So our happineſs and miſery are in his Face, his looks. Nothing ſo comfortable as his favourable Face, nothing ſo terrible again as his Face, his anger, as the Hebrew word is often taken, that ſignifies his Face. And yet how many ſleep ſound under this miſery, but believe it, 'tis a dead and a deadly ſleep, the Lord ſtanding in terms of enmity with thee, and yet thy Soul at eaſe, pitiful accurſed eaſe. I regard not the differences of your outward eſtate, that's not a thing worth the ſpeaking of, if thou be poor and baſe, and in the Worlds eye but a wretch, and with all under the hatred of God, as being an impenitent hardned ſinner, thoſe other things are nothing, this is the top, yea the total ſum of thy miſery:

misery: or be thou beautiful, or rich, or noble, or witty &c. or all these together, or what thou will, but is the Face of the Lord against thee? think as thou wilt, thy estate is not to be envyed but lamented. I cannot say, much good do it thee with all thy enjoyments, for 'tis sure they can do thee no good, and if thou doest not believe this now, the Day is at hand wherein thou shalt be forc'd to believe it, finding it then irrecoverably true. If you will, you may still follow the things of the World, walk after the lusts of your own hearts, neglect God, and please your selves, but as *Solomons* word is of judgement, *remember that the Face of the Lord is against thee*, and in that judgement it shall unvail it and let thee see it against thee. Oh! the terriblest of all sights.

Splendida miseria.

The Godly often do not see the Lord's favourable looks, while he is eying them, and the wicked usually do not see nor perceive, neither will believe that his Face is against them: but besides that the day of full discovery is a coming; the Lord doth sometimes let both the one and the other know somewhat how he stands affected towards them in peculiar deliverances and mercies. Tells his own that he forgets them not but both sees and hears them, when they think he does neither, after that loving and gracious manner they desire, and is here meant; and sometimes lets forth glances of his bright countenance, darts in a beam upon their Souls, that is more worth than many Worlds. And on the other side, he is pleased sometimes to make it known that his Face is against the wicked, either by remarkable outward judgements, which to them are the vent of his just enmity against them, or to some he speaks it more home in horrours and affrights of conscience, which to them are earnests

and

and pledges of their full misery, that *inheritance of Wo* reserved, as the Joys and Comforts of Believers are, of their *inheritance of Glory*.

Therefore if you have any belief of these things, be perswaded, be entreated to forsake the way of ungodliness, do not flatter your selves and dream of escape when you hear of outward judgements on your Neighbours and Brethren, tremble and be humbled, remember our Saviour's words, *think ye that those on whom the Tower of* Siloam *fell were greater sinners than others I tell you nay, but except you repent, you shall all likewise perish.* This seeming harsh word he that was Wisdom and sweetness it self uttered, and even in it spoke like a Saviour, speaks of perishing, that they might not perish, presses repentance by the heavy doom of unrepentance.

When you hear of this, there is none of you would willingly chuse it, that the Lord's Face should be against you, although upon very high offers made to you of other things. You think, I know, that the very sound of it is somewhat fearful, and on the other side have possibly some confus'd notion of his favour, as a thing desirable, and yet do not bestir your selves to avoid the one and enquire after the other; which is certainly by reason of your unbelief, for if you think of the love of God, as his word speaks of it, as you will say you do, whence is it, I pray you, that there is no trifle in this World, that will not take more deeply with you, and which you follow not with more earnestness than this great business of reconcilement with God, finding his Face not only, not against you, but graciously towards you, *his eyes upon you and his ears open to your Prayer.*

Your blessedness is not, no (believe it) it is not

where moſt of you ſeek it, in things below you; how can that be, it muſt be a higher good muſt make you happy, while you labour and ſweat for't in any thing under the Sun, your pains runs all to waſte, you ſeek a happy life in the Region of death, here, here it is alone in the love and favour of God, to have his countenance, and friendſhip, and free acceſs and converſe, and this no where to be found but in the ways of Holineſs.

Verſe 13.

13. *And who is he that will harm you, if you be followers of that which is good?*

THis the Apoſtle adds, as a further reaſon of the ſafety and happineſs of that way he points out from its own nature. There is ſomething even intrinſecal in meek, and upright, and holy carriage, that is apt in part to free a Man from many evils and miſchiefs that the ungodly are expos'd to, and do readily draw upon themſelves: your ſpotleſs and harmleſs deportment will much bind up the hands even of your enemies, and ſometimes poſſibly ſomewhat allay and cool the malice of their hearts, that they cannot ſo rage againſt you as otherwiſe they might, 'twill be ſomewhat ſtrange and monſtruous to rage againſt the innocent, *who is he that will harm you*, &c. Here are two things. 1. The carriage 2. The advantage of it. 1. Their carriage expreſs'd, *followers*, &c. The word is *imitaters*.

There

There is an imitation of men that is impious and wicked, taking the copy of their ſins; again an imitation that though not ſo groſly evil, yet is poor and ſervile being in mean things, yea ſometimes deſcending to imitate the very imperfections of others, as fancying ſome comelineſs in them, as ſome of *Baſil*'s Scholars that imitated his ſlow ſpeaking, which he had a little in the extream and could not help; but this is always laudable and worthy of the beſt minds to be imitaters of that which is good, whereſoever they find it, for that ſtays not in any mans perſon as the ultimate pattern, but ariſes to the higheſt Grace, being mans neareſt likeneſs to God, his Image and Reſemblance, and ſo following the example of the Saints in Holineſs, we look higher than them, and conſider them as receivers, but God as the firſt Owner and Diſpenſer of Grace, bearing his ſtamp and ſuperſcription, and belonging peculiarly to him in what hand ſoever it be found, as carrying the mark of no other Owner but his only.

The Word of God hath our Copy in its perfection, and very legible and clear, and ſo the imitation of good in the compleat Rule of it is the regulating our ways by the Word: but even in it we find beſides general Rules, the particular Tract of Life of divers eminent holy Perſons, and thoſe on purpoſe ſet before us that we may know Holineſs not to be an idle imaginary thing, but that men have really been holy, though not altogether ſinleſs, yet holy and ſpiritual in ſome good meaſure, that have ſhined as light amidſt a perverſe Generation, as greater Stars in a dark night, and yet men, as St. *James* ſays of *Elias*, *like us in Nature*, and the frailty of it; *ſubject to like paſſions as we are*. Why may we not then aſpire to be holy as they were, ὁμοιοπαθεῖς.

and attain to it, although we ſhould fall ſhort of the degree, yet not ſtopping at a ſmall meaſure, but running further, *preſſing ſtill forward towards the mark*, following them in the way they went though at a diſtance, not reaching them, and yet walking, yea, running after them as faſt as we can. Not judging of Holineſs by our own ſloth and natural averſeneſs, taking it for a ſingularity fit only for rare extraordinary Perſons, ſuch as Prophets and Apoſtles were, or as the Church of *Rome* fancies thoſe to be, that it vouchſafes a room to in the Roll of Saints; do you not know that Holineſs, is the only *Via regia*, this following of good, that path wherein all the Children of God muſt walk, one following after another, each ſtriving to equal, and if they could to outſtrip even thoſe they look on as moſt advanced in it. This is amongſt many other, a miſconceit in the Romiſh Church, that they ſeem to make Holineſs a kind of impropriate good, that the common ſort can have little ſhare in, almoſt all piety ſhut up within Cloyſter-walls, as its only fit dwelling: but it hath not liked their lodging it ſeems, but is flown over the Walls away from them, for there is little of it even there to be found, but however the opinion of it places it there, as having little to do abroad in the World.

Whereas the Truth is, that all Chriſtians have this for their common task, though ſome are under more peculiar obligations to ſtudy this one copy; look on the Rule of Holineſs, and be followers of it, and followers or imitaters one of another ſo far as their carriage agrees with that Primitive Copy, as writ after it, μιμηται. *be ye* * *followers of me*, ſays the Apoſtle, even to the meaneſt Chriſtian among thoſe he wrote to, but thus, *as I am of Chriſt.*

Is

Is it thus with us, are we zealous and emulous followers of that which is good, exciting each other by our example to a Holy and Chriſtian Converſation, *provoking one another* (ſo the Apoſtles word is) *to love, and to good works.* Or are not the moſt mutual corrupters of each other, and the Places and Societies where they live; ſome leading, and others following in their ungodlineſs, not regarding the courſe of thoſe that are moſt deſirous to walk holily, or if at all, doing it with a corrupt and evil eye, not to ſtudy and follow what is good in them, their way of Holineſs; but to eſpy any the leaſt wrong ſtep, to take exact notice of any imperfection, and ſometimes malign'd only, and by this either to reproach Religion, or to hearten or harden themſelves in their irreligion and ungodlineſs, ſeeking warrant for their own willing licentiouſneſs in the unwilling failings of God's Children.

And in their converſe with ſuch as themſelves, following their prophane way, and flattering, and bleſſing one another in it. What need we be ſo preciſe, and if I ſhould not do as others, they would laugh at me, I ſhould paſs for a fool: well thou wilt be a fool in the moſt wretched kind, rather than be accounted one by ſuch as are fools, and know not at all wherein true Wiſdom conſiſts.

Thus the moſt carried with the ſtream of this wicked World, their own inward corruption eaſily agreeing and ſuting with it; every man as a drop falling into a Torrent, and eaſily made one and running along with it, into that dead Sea where it empties it ſelf.

But they whom the Lord hath a purpoſe to ſever and ſave, he carries a contrary courſe even to that violent ſtream, and theſe are the Students of Holineſs,

the Followers of Good, that lend their endeavours thus, and look on all ſides diligently, on what may animate and advance them, on the example of the Saints in former times, and on the good they eſpy in thoſe that live together with them, and above all ſtudying that perfect Rule in the Scriptures, and that higheſt and firſt pattern, there ſo often ſet before them, even the Author of that Rule, the Lord himſelf, *to be holy as he is holy*, *to be bountiful and merciful as their Heavenly Father*, and in all labouring to be, as the Apoſtle exhorts, *Followers of God as dear Children*: As Children that are beloved of their Father, and do love and reverence him, will be ambitious to be like him, and particularly aim at the following any Vertues or Excellency in him: now thus 'tis moſt reaſonable in the Children of God, their Father being the higheſt and beſt of all Excellency and Perfection.

τέλος αν θρώπε ὁμοίωσις θέω. Pyth.

But this Excellent pattern is drawn down nearer their view in the Son *Jeſus Chriſt*, where we have that higheſt Example made low, and yet loſing nothing of its perfection, may ſtudy God in Man, and read all our Leſſon, without any blot even in our own Nature, and this truely the only way to be the beſt Proficients in this following and imitating of all good. In him all even thoſe bleſſings that men moſt deſpiſe, God teaching them by acting them and calling us to follow; *Learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in heart*: but this is too large a ſubject. Would you advance in all Grace, ſtudy Chriſt much, and you ſhall find not only the pattern in him, but ſtrength and skill from him to follow it.

2. The Advantage, *who is he that will harm you.*

The very name of it ſays ſo much, a good worthy the following for it ſelf: but there is this further to perſwade it, that beſides higher benefit, it oftentimes

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cuts off the occaſions of preſent evils and diſturbances that otherwiſe men are incident to *Who is he?* Men even evil men will often be overcome by our blameleſs and harmleſs behaviour.

1. In the Life of a Godly Man taken together in the whole body and frame of it, there is a grave beauty or comelineſs, that oftentimes forces ſome kind of reverence and reſpect to it, even in Ungodly minds.

2. Though a Natural man cannot love them ſpiritually, as Graces of the Spirit of God, for ſo only the partakers of them are Lovers of them; yet he may have, and uſually hath a natural liking and eſteem of ſome kind of vertues which are in a Chriſtian, and are not in their right nature in any other to be found; tho a Moraliſt may have ſomewhat like them, *Meekneſs*, and *Patience*, and *Charity*, and *Fidelity*, &c.

3. Theſe and other ſuch-like Graces do make a Chriſtian life ſo inoffenſive and calm, that except where the matter of their God or Religion is made the Crime, malice it ſelf can ſcarce tell where to faſten its Teeth or lay hold, hath nothing to pull by, though it would, yea, oftentimes for want of work or occaſions, 'twill fall a ſleep for a while, whereas Ungodlineſs and Iniquity ſometimes by breaking out into notorious Crimes, draws out the Sword of Civil Juſtice, and where it riſes not ſo high, yet it involves Men into frequent contentions and quarrels, *Prov.* 23. 29. how often are the luſts, and pride, and covetouſneſs of men paid with dangers, and troubles, and vexations, that beſides what is abiding, do even in preſent ſpring out of them; now theſe the Godly paſs free of by their juſt, and mild, and humble carriage; *whence ſo many jars and ſtrifs* amongſt the greateſt part, but from their unchriſtian

chriſtian Hearts and Lives, *from their luſts that war in their members*, their ſelf-love and unmortified Paſſions, he will bate nothing of his Will, nor the other of his. Thus where Pride and Paſſion meets on both ſides, it cannot be, but a fire will be kindled, when hard Flints ſtrike together, the ſparkles will fly about: but a ſoft mild ſpirit is a great preſerver of its own peace, kills the power of conteſt, as Wooll packs or ſuch like ſoft matter moſt deads the force of Bullets. *A ſoft anſwer turns away wrath*, ſays *Solomon*, beats it off, breaks the bone, as he ſays, the very ſtrength of it, as the bones are in the body.

And thus we find it, they that think themſelves high-ſpirited, and will bear leaſt as they ſpeak, are often, even by that, forc'd to low moſt, or to burſt under't; while Humility and Meekneſs eſcape many a burden, and many a blow, always keeps peace within, and often without too.

Obſ. 1. If this were duely conſidered, might it not do ſomewhat to induce your minds to love the way of Religion, for that it would ſo much abate the turbulency and unquietneſs that abounds in the lives of men, a great part whereof the moſt do procure by the earthlineſs and diſtemper of their own carnal minds, and the diſorder in their ways that ariſes thence.

2. You, whoſe hearts are ſet towards God, and your Feet entred into his ways, I hope you find no reaſon for a change, but many to commend and endear that way to you every day more than another, and amongſt the reſt even this in them you eſcape many even preſent miſchiefs, that you ſee the ways of the World are full of. And if you will be careful to ply your Rule, and ſtudy your Copy better, you ſhall find it more ſo, the more you follow that which is good,

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the more ſhall you avoid a number of outward evils that are ordinarily drawn on upon men by their own enormities and paſſions: keep as cloſe as you can to the genuine even Tract of a Chriſtian walk, and labour for a prudent and meek behaviour, adorning your holy Profeſſion, and this ſhall adorn you, and ſometimes gain thoſe that are without, yea, even your Enemies ſhall be conſtrain'd to approve it. *Matt. 10.*

'Tis known how much the ſpotleſs Lives and patient Sufferings of the Primitive Chriſtians did ſometimes work upon their Beholders, yea, on their Perſecutors, and perſwaded ſome that would not ſhare with them in their Religion, yet to ſpeak and write for them.

Seeing then that Reaſon and Experience do joyntly aver it, that the Lives of Men converſant together, have readily very much influence one upon another; for example is an animated or living Rule, and is both the ſhorteſt and powerfulleſt way of teaching,

Obſ. 1. Whoſoever are in exemplary or leading place in relation to others, be it many or few, be ye firſt followers of God, ſet before you the Rule of Holineſs, and withal the beſt and higheſt examples of theſe that have walkt according to it, and then you will be leading in it, thoſe that are under you, and bent to follow you in ſo doing, will follow that which is good. Lead and draw them on by admoniſhing, and counſelling, and exhorting; but eſpecially by walking. Paſtors, [τύποι] *enſamples*, as our Apoſtle hath it, that they may be ſtampt aright, taking the impreſſion of your Lives, ſound Doctrine alone will not ſerve, tho the Water you give your Flocks be pure, yet if you lay ſpotted Rods before them, it will bring forth ſpotted Lives in them, either teach not at all or teach by Rhetorick of your Lives. Elders * be ſuch

* ἢ μὴ διδάσκειν, ἢ διδάσκειν τῷ τρὸ πῶ. Naz.

in grave and pious carriage whatſoever be your years, for young Men may be ſo, and poſſibly gray Hairs may have nothing under them but gaddiſhneſs and folly many years old, habituated and inveterate ungodlineſs. Parents and Maſters, let your Children and Servants read in your Lives the Life and Power of Godlineſs, the Practice of Piety, not lying in your Windows or corners of your Houſes, and confin'd within the Claſp of the Book, bearing that or any ſuch like Title, but ſhining in your Lives.

2*dly*, You that are eaſily receptive of the impreſſion of example, beware of the ſtamp of unholineſs, and a carnal formal courſe of profeſſion, whereof the examples are moſt abounding, but though they be fewer that bear the lively Image of God impreſs'd on their hearts, and expreſs'd in their Actions, yet ſtudy theſe, and be followers of thoſe as they are of Chriſt. I know you will eſpy much irregular and unſanctified carriage in us that are ſet up for the Miniſtry, and look round will find the World lying in wickedneſs, yet if there be any that have any ſparks of divine light in them converſe with thoſe and follow them.

3. And generally this to all, for none ſo compleat, but may eſpy ſome imitable and emulable good even in meaner Chriſtians, acquaint your ſelves with the Word the rule of holineſs, and then with an eye to that look on one another, and be zealous of progreſs in the ways of holineſs, chooſe to converſe with ſuch as may excite you and advance you both by their advice and example. Let not a corrupt Generation in which you live, be the worſe by you, nor you the worſe by it, as far as you neceſſarily ingage to ſome converſation with thoſe that are unholy, let them not pull you into the mire, but if you can, help them out; and let

not

not any cuſtome of Sin about you, by familiar ſeeing, gain upon you ſo as to think it faſhionable and comely, yea, or ſo as not to think it deform and hateful, know that you muſt row againſt the Stream of wickedneſs in the World, unleſs you would be carried with it to the dead Sea or Lake of Perdition; take that grave counſel given, *Rom.* 12. be not *conformed to this world*, but *be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind*, which is the daily advancement in renovation, purifying and refining every day.

Now in this way you ſhall have ſweet inward peace and joy, and ſome advantage outward, that Men, except monſtruouſly cruel and malicious, will not ſo readily harm you, 'twill abate much of their rage, but however if you do not eſcape ſuffering by your holy carriage, yea if you ſuffer even for it, yet in that are ye happy.

Ver. 14.

14. *But and if you ſuffer for righteouſneſs ſake happy are you; And be not afraid of their terrours, neither be troubled.*

IN this two things. Firſt, Even in the moſt blameleſs way of a Chriſtians ſuffering ſuppoſed. Secondly, Their happineſs even in ſuffering aſſerted.

1*ſt.* Suffering ſuppoſed notwithſtanding of righteouſneſs, yea for righteouſneſs, and that not as a rare unuſual accident but as the frequent lot of Chriſtians, as *Luther* calls Perſecution *malus genius Evangelii.* And this we being forewarn'd to be not only the poſſible but the frequent lot of the Saints, ought not

to hearken to the falſe prophecies of our own ſelf-love, that divines what it would gladly have, and eaſily perſwades us to believe it, think not that any prudence will lead you by all oppoſitions and malice of an ungodly World, but many winter blaſts will meet you in the moſt inoffenſive way of Religion if you keep ſtreight to it. Suffering and war with the World is a part of the godly Man's portion here which ſeems hard, but take it altogether 'tis ſweet; none in their wits will refuſe that legacy entire, *in the World ye ſhall have trouble, but in me ye ſhall have peace.*

Look about you and ſee if there be any eſtate of Man or courſe of life exempted from troubles, the greateſt uſually ſubject to greateſt vexations, as the largeſt bodies have the largeſt ſhadows attending them. We need not tell Nobles and rich Men that Contentment doth not dwell in great Palaces and Titles, nor full Coffers, they feel it that they are not free of much anguiſh and moleſtation, and that a proportionable train of cares as conſtantly, as of Servants, follows great place and wealth; riches and trouble, or noiſe ſignified by the ſame Hebrew word, and Kings find that their Crowns that are ſet ſo richly with Diamonds without, are lin'd with Thorns within.

And ſpeak of Men that are Servants to unrighteouſneſs, beſides what is to come, are they not often forc'd to ſuffer amongſt the ſervice of their luſts, the diſtempers that attend the unhealthy, intemperance and poverty, that Dogs luxury at the heels, and the fit puniſhment of voluptuous perſons in painful diſeaſes that either quickly cut the thread of Life, or make their aged bones full of the ſins of their youth. Take what way you will, there is no place nor condition ſo fenc'd and guarded, but publick calamities, or perſonal griefs find a way to reach us. Seeing

Seeing then we muſt ſuffer, however; this kind of ſuffering, to ſuffer for righteouſneſs is far the beſt, what he ſaid ill, of doing ill, we may well ſay of ſuffering ill, if it muſt be, 'tis beſt to be for a Kingdome. And thoſe are the terms on which Chriſtians are called to ſuffer for righteouſneſs, if we will reign with Chriſt certain 'tis we muſt ſuffer with him, and if we do ſuffer with him, 'tis as certain we ſhall reign with him: And therefore ſuch ſufferers are happy.

Si violandum eſt jus, regnandi cauſa violandum.

But I ſhall proſecute this ſuffering for righteouſneſs only with relation to the Apoſtle's preſent reaſoning, his concluſion he eſtabliſhes 1. From the favour and protection of God, 2. From the nature of the thing it ſelf. Now we would conſider the conſiſtence of this ſuppoſition with thoſe reaſons.

1. The Eyes of the Lord being on the righteous for their good, and his Ear open to their Prayer how is it that for all that favour and inſpection they are ſo much expos'd to ſuffering, and even for the regard and affection they bear towards him, ſuffering for righteouſneſs, theſe ſeem not to agree well, yet they do.

'Tis not ſaid that his Eye is ſo on them, as that he will never ſee them afflicted, nor have them ſuffer any thing, no: but this is their great priviledge and comfort in ſuffering, that his gracious Eye is then upon them, and ſees their trouble, and his Ear towards them not ſo as to grant them an exemption (for that they will not ſeek for) but ſeaſonable deliverance, and in the mean while ſtrong ſupport, as is evident in that 34*th. Pſalm.* If his Eye be always on them he ſees them ſuffer often, *for their afflictions are many*, ver. 19. and if his Ear be to them, he hears many ſighs and cries preſs'd out by ſufferings, and they are content,

this

this is enough, yea better then not to ſuffer, they ſuffer and often directly for him, but he ſees it all, takes perfect notice on't, therefore 'tis not loſt. And they are forc'd to cry, but none of their cries eſcape his Ear, he hears, and he manifeſts that he ſees, and hears: for he delivers them, and till he does he keeps them from being cruſh'd under the weight of the ſuffering, he keeps all his bones not one of them is broken.

He ſees, yea appoints and provide theſe conflicts for his choiceſt Servants, he ſets his Champions to encounter the malice of Satan, and the World, for his ſake, to give proof of the truth, and the ſtrength of their love to him for whom they ſuffer, and to overcome even in ſuffering.

He is ſure of his deſign'd advantages out of the ſufferings of his Church and Saints for his name, he loſes nothing, nor they loſe nothing; but their Enemies, when they rage moſt and prevail moſt are ever the moſt loſers, his own glory grows and his peoples graces grow, yea their very number grows, and that ſometimes moſt, by their greateſt ſufferings. It was evident in the firſt Ages of the Chriſtian Churches, where were the glory of ſo much invincible love and patience if they had not been ſo put to it?

2. For the other, that the ſaid following of good would preſerve from harm, it ſpeaks truly the nature of it, what 'tis apt to do, and what in ſome meaſure it often doth, but the conſidering the nature of the World, *its enmity againſt God*, and Religion, that ſtrong poyſon in the Serpents Seed, it is not ſtrange that it often proves otherwiſe, that notwithſtanding the righteous carriage of Chriſtians, yea even becauſe of it they ſuffer much: 'tis a reſolv'd caſe, all that will live

live godly muſt ſuffer Perſecution, it meets a Chriſtian in his entry to the way of the Kingdome, and goes along all the way, no ſooner begin thou to ſeek the way to Heaven; but the World will ſeek, how to vex and moleſt thee, and make that way grievous; if no other way, by ſcoffs and taunts, as bitter blaſts to deſtroy the tender bloſſom, or bud of Religion, or (as *Herod*) to kill Chriſt newly born: you ſhall no ſooner begin to enquire after God but twenty to one, they will begin to enquire if thou art gone mad, but if thou knoweſt *who 'tis whom thou haſt truſted* and whom thou loveſt, this is a ſmall matter, what though it were deeper and ſharper ſufferings, yet ſtill *if you ſuffer for righteouſneſs, happy are you.* Which is the Second thing was propoſed, and more particularly imports, that a Chriſtian under the heavieſt load of ſufferings for righteouſneſs is yet ſtill happy, notwithſtanding theſe ſufferings. 2*dly.* That he is happier even by theſe ſufferings. And,

1. All the ſufferings and diſtreſſes of this World are not able to deſtroy the Happineſs of a Chriſtian nor diminiſh it, yea, they cannot at all touch it, 'tis out of their reach. If it were built on worldly enjoyments, then worldly deprivements and ſufferings might ſhake it, yea might undo it, when thoſe rotten ſtoups fail, that which reſts on them muſt fall, he that hath ſet his heart on his riches, a few hours can make him miſerable; 'tis almoſt in any bodies power to rob him of his Happineſs, a little ſlight or diſgrace undoes him, or whatſoever the Soul fixes on of theſe moving unfixed things, pluck them from it, and it muſt cry after them, *ye have taken away my God's.*

But the Believer's happineſs is ſafe, out of ſhot, he may be impoveriſhed and impriſon'd, and tortur'd,

and

and kill'd; but this one thing is out of hazard, he cannot be miſerable, ſtill in the midſt of all theſe ſubſiſts a happy Man. If all Friends be ſhut out, yet the viſits of the Comforter may be frequent, bringing him glad tydings from Heaven, and communing with him of the love of Chriſt, and ſolacing him in that. 'Twas a great word for a Heathen of his falſe Accuſers, *kill me they may, but they cannot hurt me*, how much more confidently may the Chriſtian ſay ſo, baniſhment he fears not, for his Country is above; nor death, for that ſets him home into that Country.

The believing Soul having hold of Jeſus Chriſt can eaſily deſpiſe the beſt, and the worſt of the World, and give a defie to all that's in it, can ſhare with the Apoſtle in that which he gives, *I am perſwaded that neither death nor life ſhall ſeparate me from the love of God, which is in Chriſt Jeſus our Lord.* Yea what tho' the frame of the World were a diſſolving and falling a pieces this happineſs holds, and is not ſtir'd by it, for 'tis in that Rock of Eternity, that ſtirs not, nor changes at all.

Our main work truly if you will believe it is this, to provide this immoveable happineſs, that amidſt all changes, and loſſes, and ſufferings, may hold firm. You may be free, choſe it rather, not to ſtand to the courteſie of any thing about you, nor of any Man, whether enemy or friend, for the tenure of your happineſs lay it higher and ſurer, and if you be wiſe provide ſuch a peace as will remain untouch'd in the hotteſt flame, ſuch a light as will ſhine in the deepeſt dungeon and ſuch a life as is ſafe even in death it ſelf, *that life that is hid with Chriſt in God.*

But if in other ſufferings, even the worſt and ſaddeſt, the Believer is ſtill a happy Man, then more eſpecially

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in thoſe that are the beſt kind, ſuffering for righteouſneſs; not only do they not detract from his happineſs; but,

2*dly*. They concur and give acceſſion to it, he is happy even by ſo ſuffering. As will appear from the following conſiderations.

1. 'Tis the happineſs of a Chriſtian, until he attain perfection, to be advancing towards it, to be daily refining from ſin, and growing richer and ſtronger in the graces that make up a Chriſtian a new creature, to attain a higher degree of patience, and meekneſs, and humility, to have the heart more weaned from the Earth and fixed on Heaven; now as other afflictions of the Saints do help them in thoſe their ſufferings for righteouſneſs, the unrighteous and injurious dealing of the World with them have a particular fitneſs for this purpoſe, thoſe trials that come immediately from God's own hand ſeem to bind to a patient and humble compliance with more authority, and (I may ſay) neceſſity. There is no plea, no place for ſo much as a word, unleſs it be directly and expreſly againſt the Lord's own dealing, but unjuſt ſuffering at the hands of Men requires that reſpect unto God, without whoſe hand they cannot move, that for his ſake, and for reverence and love to him, a Chriſtian can go through thoſe with that mild evenneſs of Spirit, that overcomes even in ſuffering.

And there is nothing outward more fit to perſwade a Man to give up with the World and its Friendſhip, than to feel much of its enmity and malice, and that directly acting it ſelf againſt Religion, making that the very quarrel which is of all things deareſt to a Chriſtian, and in higheſt eſteem with him.

If the World ſhould careſs them, and ſmile on them, they might be ready to forget their home, or at leaſt

to abate in the frequent thoughts and fervent desires of it, and turn into some familiarity with the World and favourable thoughts of it, and thus let out somwhat of their hearts after it, and thus grace would grow faint by the diversion, and calling forth of the Spirits, as in Summer in the hotteſt and faireſt weather 'tis with the body.

Opibus major, virtutibus minor.

'Tis a confirm'd obſervation by the experience of all Ages, that when the Church flouriſh'd moſt in outward peace and wealth, it abated moſt of its ſpiritual luſtre, which is its genuine and true beauty, and when it ſeem'd moſt miſerable by perſecutions and ſufferings 'twas moſt happy in ſincerity, and zeal, and vigour of grace; when the Moon ſhines brighteſt towards the Earth 'tis dark Heavenwards, and on the contrary when it appears not, is neareſt the Sun and clear towards Heaven.

2*dly*. Happy in acting and evidencing, by thoſe ſufferings for God, their love to him. Love delights in difficulties, and grows in them: the more a Chriſtian ſuffers for Chriſt the more he loves Chriſt, accounts him the dearer, and the more he loves him, ſtill the more can he ſuffer for him.

3*dly*. Happy as in teſtifying love to him, and gloriſying him, ſo in conformity with him, which is loves ambition, affects likeneſs and harmony at any rate, a Believer would readily take it as an affront, that the World ſhould be kind to him, that was ſo harſh and cruel to his beloved Lord and Maſter. Canſt thou expect or wouldſt thou wiſh ſmooth language from that World that revil'd thy Jeſus, that called him *Beelzebub*, couldſt thou own and accept friendſhip at its hands that buffetted him and ſhed his blood, or art thou rather moſt willing to ſhare with him, and of

S. *Paul's*

S. *Paul's* mind, *God forbid that I ſhould glory in any thing ſave in the Croſs of Chriſt, whereby the World is crucified to me, and I unto the World.* προσβίωναι ἐν ἀλλήσει

4. The rich ſupplies of ſpiritual comfort and joy, that in thoſe times of ſuffering are uſual, that as ſufferings for Chriſt do abound conſolations in him abound much more, as the Apoſtle teſtifies. God ſpeaking moſt peace to the Soul when the World ſpeaks moſt War, and enmity againſt it, and this compenſes abundantly, when the Chriſtian lays the greateſt ſufferings Men can inflict in the one ballance, and the leaſt glances of God's countenance in the other, it ſays 'tis worth all the enduring of theſe to enjoy this, ſays with *David let them curſe, but bleſs thou; let them frown, but ſmile thou.* And thus he uſually doth, refreſhes ſuch as are priſoners for him with viſits, that they would buy again with the hardeſt reſtraint and debaring of neareſt friends. The World cannot but miſjudge the ſtate of ſuffering Chriſtians, it ſees their Croſſes, but not their anointings. Was not St. *Stephen*, think you, in a happy poſture even in his enemies hands, was he afraid of the Showre of Stones coming about his ears that ſaw the Heavens opened, and Jeſus ſtanding on the Father's right hand, ſo little troubled with the ſtoning him, that as the Text hath it, *in the midſt of them, he fell a ſleep.* *Vident cruces noſtras, unctiones non vident.* S. Bern.

5. If thoſe ſufferings be ſo ſmall, weigh'd down even with preſent comforts, and ſo the Chriſtian happy in them in that regard, how much more doth the weight of Glory ſurpaſs, that follows theſe ſufferings, they are not worthy to come in compariſon, they are as nothing to that *glory that ſhall be revealed* in the Apoſtle's Arithmetick, [λογίζομαι] when I have caſt up the ſum of the ſufferings of this preſent time, this

inſtant, this τὸ νῦν they amount to juſt nothing in reſpect of that glory. Now theſe ſufferings happy, becauſe the way to this happineſs, and pledges of it, and (if any thing do) they raiſe the very degree of it, however 'tis an *exceeding excellent weight of glory*: the Hebrew word that ſignifies glory, ſignifies weight; yet the glories that are here are all too light, except in weight of cares and ſorrows that attend them, but that hath the weight of compleat bleſſedneſs, ſpeak not of all the ſufferings nor of all the proſperities of this poor life, nor of any thing in it, as worthy of a thought when that glory is named, yea let not this life be called life, when we mention that other life, that our Lord by his death hath purchas'd for us.

Be not afraid of their terrour] No time, nor place in the World ſo favourable to Religion, that it is not ſtill needful to arm a Chriſtian mind againſt the outward oppoſitions and diſcouragements he ſhall meet with all in his way to Heaven. This the Apoſtle's ſcope here, and doth it. 1. By an Aſſertion. 2. By an Exhortation. The Aſſertion, that in ſuffering for righteouſneſs they are happy. The Exhortation conform to the Aſſertion, that *they fear not*, why ſhould they fear any thing that are aſſured of happineſs, yea that are the more happy by thoſe very things that ſeem moſt to be feared.

The words are in part borrow'd from the Prophet *Eſay*, and he relates them as the Lord's words to him, and other godly perſons with him in that time, countermanding in them that carnal diſtruſtful fear, that drove a prophane King and people to ſeek help rather any where than in God. who was their ſtrength, *fear not their fear, but ſanctify the Lord, and let him be your fear*, &c. Iſa. 8. 12, 13.

This

This the Apoſtle extends as an univerſal Rule for Chriſtians in the midſt of greateſt troubles and dangers.

The things oppoſed here are, a perplexing troubling fear of ſufferings, as the Souls diſtemper, and a ſanctifying of God in the Heart, as the Sovereign Cure of it, and the true Principle of a healthful ſound Conſtitution of Mind.

Natural Fear, though not evil in it ſelf, yet in the Natural Man, is conſtantly irregular and diſorder'd in the actings of it, ſtill miſſing its due object, or meaſure, or both; either running in a wrong Channel, or overrunning the Banks. As there are no pure Elements to be found here in this lower part of the World, but only in the Philoſophers Books, they define them ſo, but find them no where, thus we may ſpeak of our natural Paſſions as not ſinful in their Nature, yet in us that are naturally ſinful, yea, full of ſin, they cannot eſcape the mixture and allay of it.

Sin hath put the Soul into an univerſal diſorder, that it neither loves nor hates what it ought, nor as it ought, hath neither right joy, nor ſorrow, nor hope, nor fear, a very ſmall matter ſtirs and troubles it; and as waters that are ſtirr'd (ſo the Word ſignifies) having dregs in the bottom become muddy and impure, thus the Soul by carnal Fears, is confus'd, and there is neither quiet nor clearneſs in it. A troubled Sea as it cannot reſt, ſo in its reſtleſſneſs, it *caſts up mire*, as the Prophet ſpeaks. Thus it is with the unrenewed Heart of Man, the leaſt blaſts that ariſe diſturb it, and make it reſtleſs, and its own impurity makes it caſt up mire, yea, 'tis never right with him, either he is aſleep in carnal confidence, or being ſhak'd out of that, he is hurried and tumbled too and fro with carnal Fears, either in a Lethargy, in

ταραχθῆτε.

in a Fever, or trembling Ague: Readily when troubles are at diſtance he folds his hands, and takes eaſe as long as it may be, and then being ſurpris'd, when they come ruſhing on him, his ſluggiſh eaſe is pay'd with a ſurcharge of perplexing and affrighting fears. And is not this the condition of the moſt?

Now becauſe thoſe Evils are not fully cured in the Believer, but he is ſubject to carnal ſecurity, as *David*, *I ſaid in my Proſperity, I ſhall never be moved*, and with undue fears and doubts in the apprehenſions or feeling of trouble, as he likewiſe complaining, confeſſes the dejection and diſquietneſs of his Soul, and again that he had almoſt loſt his ſtanding, *his feet had well nigh ſlipt*, therefore 'tis very needful to caveat them often with ſuch words as theſe, *fear not their fear, neither be ye troubled.* If you take it objectively their fear, be not affraid of the World's malice, or any thing it can effect, or it may be ſubjectively, as the Prophet means, do not you fear after the manner of the World, diſtruſtfully troubled, with any affliction can befall you. Sure it is pertinent in either ſenſe or both together, *fear not what they can do, nor fear as they do.*

Hæc inter dubii vivimus & morimur.

If we look on the condition of Men, our ſelves and others, are not the minds of the greateſt part continually toſs'd, and their lives worn out betwixt vain hopes and fears, providing unceſſantly new matter of diſquietneſs to themſelves.

Contemplative Natures have always taken notice of this grand Malady in our Nature, and have attempted much the cure of it, beſtow'd much pains in ſeeking out Preſcriptions and Rules for the attainment of a ſettled tranquillity of Spirit, free from the fears and troubles that perplex us: but they have prov'd but *Mountebanks*, that give big words enow, and do little or nothing

nothing, all Phyſicians of no value, or of nothing, good for nothing, as *Job* ſpeaks. Some things they have ſaid well concerning the outward Cauſes of this inward Evil, and of the inefficacy of inferiour outward things to help it, but they have not deſcended to the bottom and inward Cauſe of this our wretched unquiet Condition, much leſs aſcended to the true and only Remedy of it. In this, Divine Light is needful, and here we have it in the following verſe.

Verſe 15.

15. *But ſanctifie the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an anſwer to every man that asketh you a reaſon of the hope that is in you, with meekneſs and fear.*

IMplying the cauſe of all our fears and troubles to be this, our ignorance and diſregard of God, and the due knowledge and acknowledgment of him to be the only eſtabliſhment and ſtrength of the mind.

In the words conſider theſe three things, 1. This reſpect of God as 'tis here expreſs'd, *Sanctifie the Lord God.* 2. The ſeat of it, *in your hearts.* 3. The Fruit of it, the Power that this, *ſanctifie God in the heart,* hath to rid that heart of thoſe fears and troubles to which 'tis here oppoſed as their proper remedy.

Sanctifie] He is holy, moſt holy, the Fountain of Holineſs, 'tis he, he alone powerfully ſanctifies us, and then, and not till then we ſanctifie him. When he hath made us holy, we know and confeſs him to be holy,

we

we worſhip and ſerve our holy God, we glorifie him with our whole Souls, and all our Affections, we ſanctifie him by acknowledging his Greatneſs, and Power, and Goodneſs, and which is here more particularly intended, we do this by a holy fear of him, and faith in him, theſe confeſs his Greatneſs, and Power, and Goodneſs, as the Prophet is expreſs, *ſanctifie him, and let him be your fear and your dread.* And then adds, if thus you ſanctifie him, you ſhall further ſanctifie him, *he ſhall be your Sanctuary*, you ſhall account him ſo in believing in him, and ſhall find him ſo in protecting you, you ſhall repoſe on him for ſafety, and theſe particularly cure the heart of undue fears.

In your hearts] To be ſanctified in our Words and Actions, but primely in our Hearts, as the Root and Principle of the reſt. He ſanctifies his own throughout, makes their Language and their Lives holy, but firſt and moſt of all their Hearts, and as he chiefly ſanctifies it, it chiefly ſanctifies him, acknowledges and worſhips him often when the Tongue and Body do not, and poſſibly cannot well joyn with it, Fears, and Loves, and Truſts in him which properly the outward Man cannot do, tho' it does follow and is acted by theſe affections, and ſo hath ſhare in them in its capacity.

Beware of an external ſuperficial ſanctifying of God, for he takes it not ſo, he will interpret that a prophaning of him and his name, be not deceived, he is not mocked, he looks through all Viſages and Appearances in upon the Heart, ſees how it entertains him, and ſtands affected to him, if it be poſſeſs'd with reverence and love more than either thy tongue or carriage can expreſs, and if it be not ſo, all thy ſeeming-worſhip is but injury, and thy ſpeaking of him, is but babling, be thy Diſcourſe never

never ſo Excellent, and the more thou haſt ſeemed to ſanctifie God while thy heart hath not been chief in the buſineſs, thou ſhalt not by ſuch ſervice have the leſs, but the more fear and trouble in the day of trouble, when it comes upon thee. No eſtate ſo far off from true conſolation, and ſo full of horrors, as that of the rotten-hearted Hypocrite, his rotten Heart is ſooner ſhakt to pieces, than any other. If you would have heart-peace in God, you muſt have this heart ſanctifying of him. 'Tis the heart that is vex'd and troubled with fears, the diſeaſe is there, and if the preſcribed remedy reach not thither, 'twill do no good, but let your hearts ſanctifie him, and then he ſhall fortifie and eſtabliſh your hearts.

This ſanctifying of God in the Heart, compoſes the Heart and frees it from fears.

1. In general, the turning of the Heart to conſider and regard God, takes its off from thoſe vain, empty, windy things that are the uſual cauſes and matter of its fears, it feeds on wind, and therefore the bowels are tormented within, the Heart is ſubject to diſturbance, becauſe it lets out it ſelf to ſuch things, and lets in ſuch things into it ſelf as are ever in motion, and full of inſtability and reſtleſneſs, and ſo cannot be at quiet till God come in and caſt out theſe, to keep the Heart within, that it wander out no more to them.

2. The particulars of Fear and Faith, work particularly in this.

1. That Fear, as greateſt, overtops and nullifies all leſſer fears, the Heart poſſeſs'd with this fear, hath no room for the other, it reſolves the Heart in point of duty, what it ſhould and muſt do, not offend God by any means, lays that down as indiſputable, and ſo eaſes it of doubtings and debates in that kind, whether ſhall I

comply with the World, and abate ſomewhat of the ſincerity and exact way of Religion to pleaſe Men, or to eſcape perſecution or reproaches; no, 'tis unqueſtionably beſt, and only neceſſary to obey him rather than Men, to retain his favour be it with diſpleaſing the moſt reſpected and conſiderable Perſons we know, yea, rather chuſe the univerſal and higheſt diſpleaſure of all the World for ever, than his ſmalleſt diſcountenance for a moment; counts that the only indiſpenſible neceſſity to cleave unto God and obey him. If I pray, I ſhall be accuſed, might *Daniel* think, but yet pray I muſt, come on't what will, ſo if I worſhip God in my Prayer, they will mock me, I ſhall paſs for a Fool, no matter for that, it muſt be done, I muſt call on God and ſtrive to walk with him; this puts the mind to an eaſe, not to be hanging betwixt two, but reſolv'd what
Dan. 3. 16. to do, *we are not careful*, ſaid they, *to anſwer thee, O King, our God can deliver us*: but however, this we have put out of deliberation, we will not worſhip the Image: As one ſaid, *non oportet vivere ſed oportet navigare*, 'tis not neceſſary to have the Favour of the World, nor to have Riches, nor to Live; but 'tis neceſſary to hold faſt the Truth, and to walk Holily, to ſanctifie the name of our Lord, and Honour him whether in Life or Death.

2. Faith in God clears the mind, and diſpels carnal fears, the moſt ſure help, *what time I am afraid* (ſays *David*) *I will truſt in thee.* It reſolves the mind concerning the event, and ſcatters the multitude of perplexing thoughts that ariſe about that, what ſhall become of this and that? what if ſuch an enemy prevail? what if the place of our abode grow dangerous, and we be not provided as others are for a removal? no matter ſays Faith, though all fail, I know of one thing

will

will not, I have a Refuge, that all the ſtrength of Nature and Art cannot break in upon, or demoliſh, a high Defence, *my Rock in whom I truſt*, &c. *Pſal.* 62. 5, 6. The firm belief of, and reſting on his Power, and Wiſdom, and Love, gives a clear ſatisfying anſwer to all doubts and fears. It ſuffers us not to ſtand to jangle with each triffling grumbling objection, but carries all before it, makes day in the Soul, and ſo chaſes away thoſe fears that vex us only in the dark, as affrightful fancies do. This is indeed to ſanctifie God, and give him his own Glory, to reſt on him; and it is a fruitful homage done to him, returning us ſo much Peace and Victory over Fears and Troubles, perſwades us that nothing can ſeparate from his Love, and that only we fear'd, and ſo the things that cannot reach that, can be eaſily deſpiſed.

Seek to have the Lord in your Hearts, and ſanctifie him there, he ſhall make them ſtrong, and carry them through all dangers, *though I walk*, ſays *David*, *through the valley of the ſhadow of death, I will fear no ill, for thou art with me*, Pſal. 23. ſo Pſal. 27. 1. What is it makes the Church ſo firm and ſtout, *though the Sea roar, and the Mountains be caſt into the midſt of the Sea*: yet we will not fear, that's it, *God is in the midſt of her, ſhe ſhall not be moved*. No wonder, he immoveable, and therefore doth eſtabliſh all where he reſides. If the World in the middle of the Heart, it will be often ſhaken, for all there is continual motion and change, but God in it keeps it ſtable.

Labour to get God into your Hearts, reſiding in the midſt of them, and then in the midſt of all Conditions they ſhall not move.

In your hearts.] Our condition univerſally expoſed to ſearch and troubles, and no man ſo ſtupid but ſtudies

and projects for ſome Fence againſt them, ſome Bulwark to break the incurſion of Evils, and ſo put his mind to ſome eaſe, ridding it of the fear of them, thus the moſt vulgar Spirits in their way, for even the Brutes from whom ſuch do not much differ in their actings and courſe of Life too, are inſtructed by Nature to provide themſelves and their young Ones of Shelters, and the Birds their Neſts, and the Beaſts their Holes and Dens. Thus men gape and pant after gain, with a confus'd ill-examin'd fancy of quiet and ſafety in it, once to reach ſuch a day as to ſay with him in the Goſpel, *Soul take thine eaſe, thou haſt much Goods laid up for many years,* &c. though warn'd by his ſhort eaſe there, and by many watch words, yea, by daily experience, that days may come, yea, one day will, where fear and trouble ſhall ruſh in, and break over the higheſt Tower of Riches, that there is a day call'd the Day of Wrath, wherein they profit not at all, thus Men ſeek Safety in Greatneſs, or Multitude, or ſuppoſed Faithfulneſs of Friends, ſeek by any means to be ſtrongly underſet this way, to have many, and powerful, and confident Friends.

But wiſer men perceiving the unſafety and vanity of theſe, and all external things, have caſt about for ſome higher Courſe, they ſee a neceſſity of retiring a Man from externals that do nothing, but mock and deceive moſt thoſe that truſt moſt to them, but they cannot well tell whither to direct him, the beſt of them bring him into himſelf, and think to quiet him ſo, but the Truth is, he finds as little there, nothing truly ſtrong enough within him, to hold out againſt the many ſorrows and fears that ſtill from without do aſſault him, ſo then though 'tis well done to call off a Man from outward things, as moving Sands, that he build

build not on them, yet 'tis not enough done, for his own ſpirit is as unſettled a piece as is in all the World, and muſt have ſome higher ſtrength than its own to fortifie and fix it. This is the way that is here taught, *fear not*, &c. *but ſanctifie the Lord*, &c. and if you can attain this latter, the former will follow of it ſelf.

1. Generally, God taking the place formerly poſſeſs'd by things full of motion and unquietneſs, ſolids and eſtabliſhes the Heart.

2. Particularly, Conſider, 1. Fear of him. 2. Faith in him.

His Fear turns other fears out of doors, no room for them where this great Fear is, and being greater than they all, yet diſturbs not as they do, yea, brings as great quiet as they brought trouble, 'tis an eaſe to have but one thing for the heart to deal withal, for many times the multitude of carnal fears is more troubleſome than their weight, as flies that vex moſt by their number.

Again, This fear is not a terrible apprehenſion of God as an Enemy, but a ſweet compoſed reverence of God as our King, yea, as our Father, very great, but no leſs good than great, ſo highly eſteeming of his favour, as fearing moſt of all things to offend him in any kind, eſpecially if the Soul have been formerly either under the laſh of his apprehended diſpleaſure, or on the other ſide have had ſome ſenſible taſtes of his love, and hath been entertained in his Banqueting-Houſe, where his Banner over it was Love. Faith carries the Soul above all doubts, that if ſufferings, or ſickneſs, or death come, nothing can ſeparate it from him, this ſuffices, yea, what though he may hide his face for a time, the hardeſt of all, yet no ſeparation. His Children fear him for his

Good-

Goodneſs, are afraid to loſe ſight of that, or prejudge themſelves of any of its influences, deſire to live in his favour, and then for other things they are not much thoughtful.

2. Faith ſets the Soul in God, and if there be not ſafety, where is it? reſts on thoſe perſwaſions it hath concerning him, and that intereſt it hath in him. Believes that he ſits and rules the Affairs of the World with an all-ſeeing Eye, and all-moving Hand: the greateſt Affairs ſurcharge him not, and the very ſmalleſt eſcape him not, orders the march of all Armies, and the events of Battels, and yet thou and thy particular condition ſlips not out of his view, the very hairs of thy head are numbred, are not all thy ſteps and the hazards of them known to him? and all thy deſires before him, doth he not number thy wandrings? every weary ſtep thou art driven to, and put thy tears in his Bottle, thou mayeſt aſſure thy ſelf that however thy matters ſeem to go, all is contriv'd to ſubſerve thy Good, chiefly thy chief and higheſt Good, there is a regular Motion in them, though the Wheels do look to run croſs, all thoſe things are againſt me, ſaid old *Jacob*, and yet they were all for him.

// In all eſtates I know no hearts eaſe, but to believe, to ſanctifie and honour thy God in reſting on his Word; if thou art perſwaded of his Love, ſure that will carry above all diſtruſting fears, if thou art not clear in that point, yet depend and reſolve to ſtay by him, yea, to ſtay on him, till he ſhew himſelf unto thee, thou haſt ſome fear of him, thou canſt not deny it without groſs injury to him and thy ſelf, wouldſt willingly walk in all well-pleaſing unto him, well then, *who is among you that feareth the Lord*, though he ſee no preſent light, *yet let him truſt in the name of the Lord and ſtay*

ſtay upon his God. Preſs this upon thy Soul, for there is not another charm for all its fears and unquiet, therefore repeat it ſtill with *David*, ſing this ſtill, till it be ſtilled, chide thy diſtruſtful heart into believing, *why art thou caſt down; O my Soul! why art thou diſquieted within me? hope in God, for I ſhall yet praiſe him*, though I'm all out of tune for the preſent, never a right ſtring in my Soul, yet he will put to his hand and redreſs all, and I ſhall yet once again praiſe, and therefore even now I will hope.

'Tis true, God is a ſafe ſhelter and refuge, but he is holy, and holy Men may find admittance and protection, but can ſo vile a ſinner as I look to be protected and taken in under his ſafe guard? Go try, knock at his Door, and take it not on our word, but on his own, *it ſhall be opened to thee*, and once thou ſhall have a happy life on't in the worſt times. Faith hath this priviledge never to be aſham'd, it takes Sanctuary in God, and ſits and ſings under the ſhadow of his wings, as *David* ſpeaks, *Pſ.* 63.

Whence the unſettledneſs of minds in trouble, when 'tis near? but becauſe they are far off from God, the heart ſhak't as the leaves of the Tree with the wind, no ſtability of Spirit, God not ſanctified in it, and no wonder, for not known. Strange! the ignorance of God and the precious Promiſes of his word, the moſt living and dying ſtrangers to him, when trouble comes have not him a known refuge, but are to begin to ſeek after him, and to enquire the way to him, cannot go to him as acquainted, and ingaged by his own covenant with them, others have empty knowledge and can diſcourſe of Scripture, and Sermons, and Spiritual Comforts, and yet have none of that fear, and truſt that quiets the Soul, notions of God in their heads, but God not ſanctified in their hearts.

If you will be adviſed, this is the way to have a high and ſtrong ſpirit indeed, and to be above troubles and fears, ſeek for a more lively and Divine Knowledge of God than moſt as yet have, and reſt not till you bring him into your hearts, and then you ſhall reſt indeed in him.

Sanctifie him by fearing him, *let him be your fear and your dread*, not only outward groſs offences, fear an Oath, fear to prophane the Lord's Holy Day: but fear all irregular earthly deſires, the diſtemper'd affecting any thing, entertaining any thing in the ſecret of your hearts that may give diſtaſte to your beloved, take heed, reſpect the great Perſon you have in you Company and lodges within you, the holy Spirit, grieve him not, for it will turn to your own grief if you do: for all your comfort is in his hand, and flows from him, if you be but in heart dallying with ſin, it will unfit you for ſuffering, outward troubles, and make your ſpirit low and baſe in the day of tryal, yea it will fill you with inward trouble and diſturb that peace which I am ſure you that know, eſteem more of, then all the peace and flouriſhing of this World. Outward troubles do not moleſt nor ſtir inward peace, but an unholy unſanctified affection doth, all the winds without, cauſe not an earth quake, but that within its own bowels doth. Chriſtians are much their own enemies in unwary walking, prejudge themſelves of thoſe comforts they might have in God, and ſo are often almoſt as perplex'd and full of fears upon ſmall occaſions as worldlings are.

Sanctifie him by believing, ſtudy the main queſtion your reconcilement with him, labour to bring that to ſome point, and then in all other occurrences Faith will uphold you by relying on God as now yours: for thoſe

thoſe three things make up the Souls peace. 1. To have right apprehenſion of God, looking on him in Chriſt and according to that covenant that holds in him. And 2. A particular apprehenſion, that is laying hold on him in that covenant as gracious and merciful, as ſatisfied and appeaſed in Chriſt, ſmelling in his ſacrifice, which was himſelf, a ſavour of reſt, and ſetting himſelf before me that I may rely on him in that notion. 3. A perſwaſion that by ſo relying on him my Soul is at one, yea is one with him, yet while this is wanting, as to a Believer it may be, the other is our duty to Sanctifie the Lord in believing the word of Grace, and believing on him, repoſing on his Word, and this even ſever'd from the other doth deliver in a good meaſure from diſtracting fears and troubles, and ſets the Soul at ſafety.

Whence is it that in times of Perſecution or Trouble, Men are troubl'd within and rackt with fears, but becauſe inſtead of God, their hearts are glued to thoſe things that are in hazard by thoſe troubles without, their eſtates, or their eaſe, or their lives; the Soul deſtitute of God eſteems ſo highly of ſuch things, that it cannot but exceedingly feel when they are in danger, and fear their loſs moſt, gaping after ſome imagin'd good, and Oh! if I had but this I were well; but then ſuch or ſuch a thing may ſtep in and break all my Projects; and this troubles the poor Spirit of Man that hath no higher deſigns, but ſuch as are ſo eaſily blaſted, and ſtill as any thing in Man lifts up his Soul to vanity, it muſt needs fall down again into vexation. There is a word or two in the *Hebrew* for *Idols*, that ſignifie withal *Troubles* and *Terrors*, and ſo 'tis certainly: All our Idols prove ſo to us, fill us with nothing but anguiſh and troubles, with unprofitable cares and fears that are

good for nothing but to be fit punishments of that folly, out of which they arise. The ardent love or wilful desire of Prosperity, or Wealth, or Credit in the World carries with it, as inseparably ty'd to it, a bundle of fears and inward troubles. *They that will be rich* (says the Apostle) *fall into a snare and many noysome and hurtful lusts*, and as he adds in the next Verse, *they pierce themselves through with many sorrows.* He that hath set his Heart upon an Estate, or a commodious Dwelling and Lands, or upon a healthful and long Life, cannot but be in continued alarms of renewed fears concerning them, especially in troublous times, the least rumor of any thing that threatneth his deprivement of those advantages strikes him to the heart; because his heart is in them, I am well seated, thinks he, and I am of a sound strong constitution, and may have many a good day. Oh! but beside the Arrows of Pestilence that are flying round about, the Sword of a cruel Enemy is not far off, this will affright and trouble a heart void of God; but if thou wouldst readily answer and dispel all these and such like fears, *Sanctifie the Lord God in thy Heart*, the Soul that eyes God renounces these things, looks on them at a great distance, as things far from the Heart, and therefore that cannot easily trouble it, but looks on God as within the Heart, sanctifies *him in it* and rests on him.

The Word of God cures the many fooliſh hopes and fears that we are naturally sick of, by representing to us hopes and fears of a far higher Nature, which swallow up and drown the other, as Inundations and Landfloods, do the little Ditches in those Meadows that they overflow, *fear not* (says our Saviour) *him that can kill the Body*, what then, fear must have some work, he adds, *but fear him that can kill both Soul and Body.*

Thus

Thus in the paſſage cited here, *fear not their fear, but ſanctifie the Lord and let him be your fear and your dread.* And ſo for the hopes of the World, care not to loſe them for God, there is a hope in you (as it follows here) that is far above them.

Be ready always to give an anſwer.] The real Chriſtian is all for Chriſt, hath given up all right of himſelf to his Lord and Maſter, to be all his, to do and ſuffer for him, and therefore ſure will not fail in this which is leaſt, to ſpeak for him upon all Occaſions, if he ſanctifie him in his Heart, the Tongue will follow, *and be ready.* [πρὸς ἀπολογιαν] *to give an Anſwer*, a Defence or Apology. Of this here four things,

1. The need of it, *Men will ask an account.*
2. The Matter or Subject of it, *the hope in you.*
3. The manner, with *meekneſs* and *fear.*
4. The faculty for it, *be ready.*

1. Religion is always the thing in the World that hath the greateſt calumnies and prejudices caſt upon it, and this engages thoſe that love it to endeavour to clear and disburden it of them, this they do chiefly by the Tract of their Lives, the Saints by their blameleſs Actions and patient Sufferings, do write moſt real and convincing Apologies, yet ſometimes 'tis expedient, yea, neceſſary to add verbal Defences, and to vindicate not ſo much themſelves, as their Lord and his Truth, ſuffering in the Reproaches caſt upon them: for did they reſt in their Perſons, a regardleſs contempt of them were uſually the fitteſt anſwer, but where the holy Profeſſion of Chriſtians is likely to receive either the main or the indirect blow, and a word of defence may do any thing to award it, there we ought not to ſpare do it. *Spreta vilescerent.*

Chriſtian Prudence goes much in the regulating of this: for holy Things are not to be caſt to Dogs,

ſome are not capable of rational Anſwers, eſpecially in Divine Things, they were not only loſt upon them, but Religion indignified by conteſting: but every one that enquires a reaſon or an account, which ſuppoſes ſomething receptive of it, we ought to judge our ſelves engaged to give it, be it an Enemy if he will hear, if it gain him not, it may in part convince and cool him, much more be it one that ingenuouſly enquires for ſatisfaction, and poſſibly inclines to receive the Truth; but is prejudic'd againſt it by falſe miſrepreſentations of it, as Satan and the prophane World are very inventive of ſuch ſhapes and colours as may make Truth moſt odious, drawing monſtrous miſconſequences out of it, and belying the Practices of Chriſtians, making their Aſſemblies horrible and vile by falſe imputations, and thus are they often neceſſitated to declare the true Tenor, both of their Belief and Lives in Confeſſions of Faith, and Remonſtrances of their carriage and cuſtom.

The very name of Chriſtians in the Primitive Times was made hateful by the fouleſt aſſerſions of ſtrange wickedneſſes committed in their Meetings, and paſt credibly through with all that were not particularly acquainted with them, thus the *Waldenſes*, and ſo both were forc'd to publiſh Apologies, and as here, every one bound ſeaſonably to clear himſelf and his Brethren and Religion.

Be always ready.] So not always to be done to every one, but being ready to do, 'tis to be conſidered, when, and to whom, and how far.

2. But all that they are to give account of, is compris'd here under this, *the hope that is in you.* Faith is the Root of Graces; and of all Obedience and Holineſs, and Hope is ſo near in Nature to it, that the one is commonly named for the other, for the things that Faith

Faith apprehends and lays hold on as preſent in the Truth of Divine Promiſes, Hope looks out for as to come in their certain performance, to believe a promiſe to be true before it be perform'd, is no other but to believe that it ſhall be performed, and hope expects that.

Many rich and excellent things do the Saints receive even in this mean deſpiſed condition they have here, but their hope is rather mention'd as the ſubject they may ſpeak and give account of with moſt advantage, both becauſe all they receive in preſent, is but as nothing to what they hope for, and becauſe ſuch as it is, it cannot be made known at all to a natural Man, and is ſo clouded with their afflictions and ſorrows, theſe he ſees, but their Graces and Comforts he cannot ſee; and therefore the very ground of higher hopes, ſomewhat to come, though he knows not what it is, ſpeaks more ſatisfaction: To hear of another life and a happineſs hoped for, any man will confeſs it ſayes ſomething, and deſerves to be conſidered.

So then the whole Sum of Religion goes under this word, *the hope that is in you*, for two Reaſons. 1. For that it doth indeed all reſolve and terminate into things to come, and leads and carries on the Soul towards them by all the Graces in it, and all the exerciſe of them, and all through ſervices and ſufferings, and aims at this as its main ſcope, to keep that life to come in the Believers eye, till he get it in his hand, to entertain the hope of it, and bring him home to poſſeſs it. Therefore the Apoſtle calls Faith, *the ſubſtance of things hoped for*, that which makes them be before they be, gives a ſolidity and ſubſtance to them. The name of hope in other things ſcarce ſuits withal, but ſounds a kind of uncertainty, and is ſomewhat airy, for

[*Spes eſt nomen boni incerti.* Sen.] of all other hopes but this 'tis a very true Word, *that 'tis the name of an uncertain good*; but the Goſpel being entertain'd by Faith, furniſhes a hope that hath ſubſtance and reality in it, and all its Truths do concenter into this, to give ſuch a hope. There was in St. *Paul's* word, beſides the fitneſs for his ſtratagem at that time, a Truth ſuitable to this, where he aſſigns his whole Cauſe for which he was in queſtion by the name of his *hope of the reſurrection.* *Acts.* 23.

And indeed this Hope carries its own apology in it for it ſelf and for Religion. What can more pertinently anſwer all exceptions againſt the way of Godlineſs than this, to repreſent what hopes the Saints have that walk in that way. If you ask whither tends all this your preciſeneſs and ſingularity; why can't you live as your Neighbours and the reſt of the world about you? Truly the reaſon is this, we have ſomewhat further to look to than our preſent condition, and far more conſiderable than any thing here; we have a hope of Bleſſedneſs after time, a hope to dwell in the preſence of God, where our Lord Chriſt is gone before us, and we know, that *as many as have this hope, muſt purifie themſelves even as he is pure.* The City we tend to is holy, and no unclean thing ſhall enter into it, the hopes we have cannot ſubſiſt in the way of the ungodly world, they cannot breath in that air, but are choak'd and ſtifl'd with it, and therefore we muſt take another way, unleſs we will forego our hopes and ruin our ſelves for company. But all that buſle of Godlineſs you make, is but oſtentation and hypocriſie: that may be your judgment, but if it were ſo, we had but a poor bargain, *they have their reward*, that which they deſire (*to be ſeen, of Men*) is given them, and they can look for no more; but we would be loath it were ſo with us, that *Matth.* 6.

which

which our eye is on, is to come, our hopes are the thing upholds us, we know that we ſhall appear before the Judge of hearts, where ſhews and formalities will not paſs, and we are perſwaded, that *the hope of the hypocrite ſhall periſh*, no Man ſhall be ſo much diſappointed and aſhamed as he, but the hope that we have makes not aſhamed: and while we conſider that ſo far are we from the regard of Men's Eyes, that were it not we are bound to profeſs our hope and avow Religion, and to walk like it even before Men, we would be content to paſs through altogether unſeen and deſire to paſs as if it were ſo, as regardleſs either of the approbation, or of the reproaches and miſtakes of Men, as if there were no ſuch thing, for it is indeed nothing.

Yea the hopes we have make all things ſweet, therefore do we go through diſgraces and ſufferings with patience, yea with joy, becauſe of that hope of Glory, and joy laid up for us. A Chriſtian can take joyfully the ſpoylings of his Goods, knowing that he hath in Heaven a better and an enduring ſubſtance.

The hope.] All the eſtate of a Believer lyeth in hope, and 'tis a Royal eſtate, for outward things, the Children of God have what he thinks fit to ſerve them, but thoſe are not their portion, and therefore he gives often more of the World to theſe that ſhall have no more hereafter; but all their flouriſh and luſtre is but a baſe advantage, as a Lacquey's gaudy Cloaths that uſually make more ſhew than his that is heir of the eſtate. How often under a mean outward condition and very deſpicable every way, goes an heir of Glory, born of God, and ſo Royal, born to a Crown that fadeth not, an eſtate of hopes, but ſo rich and ſo certain hopes, that the leaſt thought of them ſurpaſſes all the World's

World's Poſſeſſions. Men think ſomwhat for preſent, a bird in hand, as you ſay, the beſt on't, but the odds is in this, that when all preſent things ſhall be paſt, and ſwept away, as if they had not been, then ſhall theſe Hopers be in eternal poſſeſſion, they only ſhall have all for ever, that ſeem'd to have little or nothing here.

Oh! how much happier to be the meaneſt Expectant of the Glory to come, than alone Poſſeſſor of all this World, theſe are often held ſhort in earthly things, and had they the greateſt abundance of them yet cannot reſt in that; ſo all the ſpiritual bleſſings that they do poſſeſs here, are nothing to the hopes that is in them, but as an earneſt penny to their great inheritance; ſo indeed it confirms their hope and aſſures it them of that full eſtate, and therefore be it never ſo ſmall, they may look on it with joy, not ſo much looking on it as ſimply in it ſelf, as what it is in relation to that which it ſeals and aſcertains the Soul of; be it never ſo ſmall, yet is it a pledge of the great glory and happineſs which we deſire to ſhare in.

'Tis the grand comfort of a Chriſtian to look often beyond all that he can poſſeſs or attain here, and as to anſwer others, when he is put to it concerning his hope, ſo to anſwer himſelf concerning all his preſent griefs and wants, I have a poor travellers lot here, little friendſhip, and many ſtraits, but yet I may go cheerfully homewards, for thither I ſhall come, and there I have riches, and honour enough, a Palace and a Crown abiding me, here nothing but deep calling unto deep, one calamity and trouble, as waves following another: but I have a hope of that reſt that remaineth for the people of God, I feel the infirmities of a mortal ſtate, but my hopes of immortality content

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me under them, I find ſtrong and cruel aſſaults of tentations breaking in upon me, but for all that I have aſſured hope of a full victory, and then of everlaſting peace. I find a law in my members rebelling againſt the law of my mind, the worſt of all evils, ſo much ſtrength of corruption within me, yet there is withal a hope within me of deliverance, and I look over all to that, I liſt up my head, becauſe the day of my redemption draws nigh. This I dare avow and proclaim to all, and not be aſhamed to anſwer concerning this bleſſed hope.

But this to be done with *meekneſs* and *fear*. Meekneſs towards Men, and reverent Fear towards God.

With Meekneſs] Not therefore bluſtring and flying out into invectives, becauſe he hath the better on't againſt any Man that anſwers touching this hope, as ſome think themſelves certainly authoriz'd to rough ſpeech, becauſe they plead for truth, and are on its ſide, on the contrary, ſo much the rather ſtudy meekneſs for the glory and advantage of the truth, it needs not the ſervice of paſſion, yea nothing ſo diſſerves it, as paſſion when ſet to ſerve it; the ſpirit of truth is withal the Spirit of meekneſs, the Dove that reſted on that great Champion of truth, who is the Truth it ſelf, and from him is derived to the lovers of truth, and they ought to ſeek the participation of it. Imprudence makes ſome kind of Chriſtians loſe much of their labour, ſpeaking for Religion, and drive thoſe further off that they would draw into it.

And fear] Divine things never to be ſpoke of in a light perfunctory way, but with a reverent grave temper of Spirit, and for this reaſon ſome choice to be made both of time and perſons. The confidence that is in this hope makes the Believer not fear Men,

to whom he anſwers, but ſtill he fears his God for whom he anſwers, and whoſe intereſt is chief in thoſe things he ſpeaks of. The Soul that hath the deepeſt ſenſe of ſpiritual things and Knowledge of God, is moſt affraid to miſcarry in ſpeaking of him, moſt tender and wary how to acquit it ſelf when engaged to ſpeak of and for God.

Ready] In this, knowledge and affection, and courage. For Knowledge, not requir'd of every Chriſtian to be able to proſecute ſubtilties, and encounter the ſophiſtry of Adverſaries, eſpecially in obſcure points, but all bound to know ſo much, as to be able to aver that hope that is in them, the main Doctrine of Grace and Salvation, wherein the moſt of Men are lamentably ignorant.

Affection ſets all on work, whatſoever faculty the mind hath, it will not ſuffer it to be uſeleſs, and it harden's it againſt hazards in defence of the truth.

But the only way ſo to know and love the truth and have courage for it, is that, to have the Lord ſanctified in the heart. Men may diſpute ſtoutly againſt Popery and Errors, and yet be ſtrangers to God and this hope, but ſure 'tis the livelieſt defence, and only that which returns comfort within, when it ariſes from the peculiar intereſt of the Soul in God, and in thoſe truths, and that hope that is queſtion'd; 'tis then pleading for the neareſt friend, and for a Man's own rights and inheritance, and theſe will animate and edge it when not for a hope you have heard or read of barely, but a hope in you, and not a hope in Believers in general but in you in a particular, ſenſe of that hope within.

But altho you find it not ſo ſtrong in you for your particular

particular intereſt, yet are you ſeeking after it, and deſiring it mainly as your chief deſign to attain, then forbear not if you have occaſion to ſpeak for it, and commend it others, and mantain the ſweetneſs and cerainty of it.

And to the end you may be the more eſtabliſh'd in it, and ſo the ſtronger to anſwer for it, not only againſt Men, but that great Adverſary that ſeeks ſo much to infringe, know the right foundation of it, build it never on your ſelves nor any thing in you.

The work of Grace may evidence to you the truth of your hope, but its ground it faſtens on is Jeſus Chriſt, in whom all our rights and evidences hold good; his death aſſuring us of freedom from condemnation, and his life and poſſeſſion of glory the foundation of our hope, *Heb.* 6. 19.

If you would have it immoveable reſt it there, lay all this hope on him, and when aſſaulted, fetch all your anſwers for it from him, *for 'tis Chriſt in you that is your hope of glory.* Coloſſ. 1. 27.

Verſe 16.

16. *Having a good conſcience, that whereas they ſpeak evil of you, as of evil doers, they may be aſhamed that falſly accuſe your good Converſation in Chriſt.*

THE *proſperity of fools is their deſtruction,* (ſays *Solomon*) none of God's Children die of this diſeaſe, of too much eaſe, he knows well how to breed them, and fit them for a Kingdome, he keeps them

in exerciſe, but yet ſo, as they are not ſurcharg'd, he not only directs them how to overcome, but enables and ſupports them in all their conflicts, and gives them victory. One main thing tending to their enablement and victory is this, which is here requir'd in the Saints, and is withal wrought and maintained in them by the Spirit of God, *Having a good Conſcience*, &c.

1. Two parties here oppoſed in conteſt, the evil Tongues of the ungodly, and the good Conſcience and Converſation of the Chriſtian, *they ſpeak evil of you and falſly accuſe you*, but have you a good Conſcience.

2*dly*. The ſucceſs of their conteſt, the good Conſcience prevails, and the evil-ſpeakers are aſhamed.

They ſpeak evil.] This is a general evil in the corrupt nature of Man. though in ſome it riſes to a greater height than in others. Are not Tables, and Chambers, and almoſt all Societies and meetings full of it, and even they that have ſome diſlikings of it, yet readily carried with the ſtream, and for company's ſake take a ſhare, if not in lending in their word, yet lending their ear, and willingly hearing the detractions of others, and unleſs it be of their friends or ſuch as they have intereſt in, do inſenſibly ſlide into ſome forc'd complacency, and eaſily receive the impreſſion of calumnies and defamings? But the moſt are more active in this evil. can caſt in their penny to make up the ſhot, have their taunt or criticisme upon ſome body in readineſs to make up the feaſt, ſuch as moſt companies entertain one another withal, but 'tis a vile diet, Satan's name, as the Syriack calls him, *an eater of calumnies*. This tongue-evil, hath its root in the heart, a perverſe conſtitution there, pride and ſelf-love, an overweening eſteem that Men naturally have of themſelves mounts them into that Chair, gives them

a fancied authority of judging others, and ſelf-love a deſire to be eſteem'd, and for that end ſpare not to depreſs others, and load them with diſgraces, and miſcenſures, upon their ruins to raiſe themſelves. [*Ex alieni nominis jactura gaudium ſibi faciunt ad gloriam.* Sal.]

But this bent of the heart and tongue unrenew'd, to evil ſpeaking, works and vents moſt in the World againſt thoſe that walk moſt contrary to the courſe of the World. This Furnace of the tongne is kindled from hell, as St. *James* tells us, and is made ſeven times hotter than ordinary. As for ſincere Chriſtians, a Company of hypocrites (ſay they) who ſo godly, but yet they are falſe, and malicious, and proud, *&c.* And no kind of carriage in them ſhall eſcape, there ſhall be ſome device to wreſt and miſname it; if they be cheerful in Society, that ſhall be accounted more liberty than ſuits with their profeſſion, if of a graver ſad temper, that ſhall paſs for ſullen ſeverity; thus *John Baptiſt* and Chriſt, *Matth.* 11. If they be diligent, and wary in their affairs, then in the World's conſtruction they are as covetous and worldly as any, if careleſs and remiſs in them, then ſilly witleſs bodies, good for nothing, ſtill ſomthing ſtands croſs.

The Enemies of Religion have not any where ſo quick an Eye, as in obſerving the ways of ſuch as ſeek after God, *my remarkers David* calls them, they that ſcan my ways, as the word is, will not let paſs the leaſt ſtep unexamined. If nothing be found faulty, then their invention works, either forges compleat falſhoods, or diſguiſes ſomthing that lyes open to miſtake, or if they can catch hold on any real failing, no end of their triumph and inſultations. 1. They aggravate and raiſe it to the higheſt. 2. While they will not admit to be judged of themſelves by their conſtant walk, they ſcruple not to judge of the condition of a Chriſtian

Christian by any one particular action, wherein he doth, or seems at least to miscarry. 3. They rest not there, but make one failing of one Christian the reproach of all, take up your Devoto's, there's never a one of them the better. 4. Nor rest they there, but make personal failings of those that profess it, the disgrace of Religion it self: Now all these are very crooked Rules and gross injustice.

1. There is a great difference betwixt a thing taken favourably, and the same action misconstrued.

2. A great difference betwixt one particular act and a mans estate or inward frame, which they either consider not, or willingly or maliciously neglect.

3. How large is the difference that there is betwixt one and another in the measure of Grace, and of their prudence, either in their Naturals, or in Grace, or possibly in both, that some who are honest in matter of Religion, yet being very weak may miscarry in such things, as other Christians come seldome near the hazard of, and though some should wholly forsake the way of Godliness, wherein they seem'd to walk, yet why should that reflect upon such as are real and steadfast in it, *they were amongst us*, sayes the Apostle, *but were not of us*. Offences of this kind must be, but the *woe* rests on him, by whom they come, not on other Christians, and if it spread further than the party offending, 'tis to the prophane World that take offence at Religion because of him, as our Saviour hath express'd it, *Woe to the World because of offences*, they shall stumble, and fall, and break their necks upon these stumbling-blocks or scandals. Thou that art prophane and seest the failing of a Minister or Christian, and art hardened by it, this is a Judgment to thee, that thou meetest with such a block in thy Way. Woe to the World: Its judge-

judgement on a place, where God makes Religion in the Perſons of ſome to be ſcandalous.

4. Religion it ſelf remains ſtill it ſelf, whatſoever be the failings and blots of one or more that profeſs it, it is pure and ſpotleſs, if it teach not Holineſs, and Meekneſs, and Humility, and all good purely, then except againſt it, but if it be a ſtreight golden Reed by which the Temple is meaſured, then let it have its own eſteem both of ſtreightneſs and precioufneſs, whatſoever unevenneſs be found in thoſe that profeſs to receive it.

Suſpect and ſearch your ſelves even in general for this evil, of evil-ſpeaking. Conſider that we are to give [λόγον λόγων] *an account of words*, and if for idle [ἄργον ῥῆμα] workleſs words, how much more of lying or bit ing words. Learn more humility and ſelf-cenſure, blunt that fire-edge upon your own hard and diſordered hearts, that others may meet with nothing but charity and lenity at your hands. *De verbo mendaci aut mordaci Bern.*

But particularly beware of this in more or leſs, earneſt, or in jeſt, to reproach Religion or thoſe that profeſs it, know how particularly the glorious name of God is intereſs'd in that, and they that dare to be affronting him, what ſhall they ſay? how ſhall they ſtand? when he calls them to account. If you have not attained to it, yet do not bark againſt it, but the rather eſteem highly of Religion, love it, and the very appearance of it where you find it, give it reſpect and your good word at leaſt, and from an external approbation, Oh! that you would aſpire to inward acquaintance with it and then no more were needful to be ſaid in this, it would commend it ſelf to you ſufficiently, but in the mean time be aſhamed, be afraid of that profeſs'd enmity againſt God that is amongſt you, a

malignant

malignant hateful Spirit againſt thoſe that deſire to walk holily, whetting your Tongues againſt them.

1. Conſider, What do you mean, this Religion we all profeſs, is it the way to Heaven, or is it not? do you believe this word or no? If you do not, what do you here? If you do, then you muſt believe too, that they that walk cloſeſt by this Rule, are ſureſt in that way; they that dare not ſhare with your Oaths, and exceſſive Cups, and prophane Converſation; what can you ſay? it is not poſſible to open your mouth againſt them without renouncing this Word and Faith: Therefore either declare you are no Chriſtians, and Chriſt not yours, or in his name, I enjoyn you that you dare no more ſpeak an ill word of Chriſtianity, and the power of Religion, and thoſe that ſeek after it: There be not many higher ſigns of a reprobate Mind, than to have a bitter virulent Spirit againſt the Children of God. Seek that tie of affection and fraternity, for hereby we know (ſays the beloved Apoſtle St. *John*) *that we are tranſlated from death to life, becauſe we love the Brethren.*

But becauſe thoſe hiſſings are the natural Voice of the Serpents Seed, expect them, you that have a mind to follow Chriſt, and take this guard againſt them, that is here directed you, *having a good Conſcience*

'Tis a fruitleſs verbal debate, whether Conſcience be a Faculty or Habit, or not, and as in other things, ſo in this, that moſt of all requires more ſolid and uſeful Conſideration, the vain mind of man feedeth on the wind, loves to be buſie to no purpoſe. How much better is it to have this ſupernatural goodneſs of Conſcience, than to diſpute about the Nature of it, to find it duely teaching and admoniſhing, reproving and comforting, rather than to define it moſt exactly.

Magna conatu magnas nugas.

Malo ſentire compunctionem quam ſcire ejus definitionem.

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When all is examin'd, 'twill be found to be no other, but the *mind of man under the Notion of a particular Reference to himſelf and his own Actions.* And there is a twofold goodneſs of the Conſcience, *Purity* and *Tranquillity*, and this flows from the other, ſo that the former is the thing we ought primely to ſtudy, and the latter will follow of it ſelf: for a time indeed the Conſcience, that is in a good meaſure pure, may be unpeaceable, but ſtill it is the apprehenſion and ſenſe of preſent or former impurity that makes it ſo, for without the conſideration of guiltineſs, there is nothing that can trouble it, it cannot apprehend the wrath of God, but with relation unto ſin.

The Goodneſs of Conſcience here recommended, is *the integrity and holineſs of the whole inward Man in a Chriſtian*, ſo the Ingredients of it are, 1. A due Light or Knowledge of our Rule, that as the Lamps in the Temple muſt be ſtill burning within, as filthineſs is always the companion of darkneſs; therefore if you would have a good Conſcience, you muſt by all means have ſo much Light, ſo much Knowledge of the Will of God, as may regulate you, and ſhew you your way, teach you how to do, and ſpeak, and think, as in his preſence. 2. A conſtant regard and uſing of this Light, applying it to all, not ſleeping, but working by it, ſtill ſeeking a nearer conformity with the known will of our God, daily redreſſing and ordering the affections by it, not ſparing to knock off whatſoever we find irregular within, that our hearts may be poliſh'd, and brought to a right Frame by that Rule: and this is the daily inward Work of the Chriſtian, his great buſineſs to purifie himſelf as his Lord is pure.

And 3. For the advancing of this work is needful, a frequent ſearch of our Hearts and of our Actions, not

only to consider what we are to do but what we have done, these reflex inquiries, as they are a main part of the Conscience's proper work, they are a chief means of making and keeping the Conscience good. 1 Acquainting the Soul with its own estate, with the motions and inclinations that are most natural to it. 2. Stirring it up to work out, and purge away by repentance, the pollution it hath contracted by any outward act or inward motion of sin. 3. This search both excites and enables the conscience to be more watchful, teaches how to avoid and prevent the like errors for the time to come; as natural wise Men labour to gain thus out of their former oversight in their affairs, to be the wiser and warier by them, and lay up that as bought wit, that they have payed dear for, and therefore are careful to make their best advantage on't; God makes the consideration of their falls, preservatives to his Children from falling, makes a medicine of this poyson. Thus that the Conscience may be good it must be enlighten'd, and it must be watchful, both advising before, and after censuring according to that light.

The most little regard this, they walk by guess, either ignorant Consciences, and the blind (you say) swallow many a fly, yea, how many Consciences without sense, as seared with an hot Iron, stupified, that feel nothing, others satisfied with a civil righteousness, an imagin'd goodness of conscience, because they are free from gross crimes, others that know the rule of Christianity, yet study not a conscientious respect to it in all things, some transient looks upon the rule and their own hearts it may be, but sit not down, make it not their business, have time for any thing, but that, share not with St. *Paul*, do not exercise themselves

Non vacant bonæ menti.

ſelves in this *to have a conſcience void of offence towards God and Men.* Thoſe were his aſceticks, [ἀσκῶ] he breath'd himſelf in ſtriving againſt what might defile the Conſcience, or, as the word ſignifies, elaborately wrought and dreſs'd his conſcience. Think you, that other things cannot be done without diligence, and intention, and is this a work to be done at random, no 'tis the moſt exact and curious of all works, to have the Conſcience right, and keep it ſo, as watches or other ſuch neat pieces of Workmanſhip, except they be daily wound up and skillfully handled, they will quickly go wrong, yea beſides daily inſpection, it would (as they) at ſometimes be taken to pieces, and more accurately cleanſed, for the beſt kept will gather foyl and duſt; ſometimes a Chriſtian ſhould ſet himſelf to a more ſolemn examination of his own heart beyond his daily ſearch, and all little enough to have ſo precious a good as this, *a good Conſcience.* They that are moſt diligent and vigilant, find nothing to abate as ſuperfluous, but ſtill need of more. The heart to be kept with all diligence, or above all keeping, corruption within ready to grow and gain upon it, if it be never ſo little neglected, and from without to invade it, and get in; we breath in a corrupt infected air, and have need daily to antidote the heart againſt it.

Acts 24. 16.

ἀσκήσασα πάντα Hom.

You that are ſtudying to be excellent in this art of a good Conſcience, go on, ſeek daily progreſs in it, the ſtudy of Conſcience is a more ſweet profitable ſtudy than of all Science wherein is much vexation, and the moſt little or no fruit, read this book diligently and correct your Errata by that book, the word of God, labour to have it pure and right, other books and works are περίεργα, *curious,* and παρεργα, *by works,* they

ſhall not appear, but this is one of the books that ſhall be opened in that great day, according to which we muſt be judged.

On this follows a good Converſation, as inſeparably connexed with a good Conſcience. Grace is of a lively active nature, and doth act like it ſelf; holineſs in the heart will be holineſs in the life too, not ſome good actions, but a good Converſation, an uniform, even tract of life, the whole revolution of it regular, the inequality of ſome Chriſtians ways doth breed much diſcredit to Religion and diſcomfort to themſelves.

But obſerve here. 1. The order of theſe two. 2. The principle of both.

1. The Conſcience good, and then the Converſation, make the tree good, and the fruit will be good, ſays our Saviour, ſo here a good Conſcience the root of a good Converſation; moſt Men begin at the wrong end of this work, would reform the outward Man firſt, that will do no good, 'twil be but dead work.

Do not reſt upon external reformations, they will not hold, there is no abiding nor no advantage in ſuch a work, you think when reprov'd, Oh! I will mend and ſet about the redreſs of ſome outward things but this is as good as to do nothing, the Mind and Conſcience being defiled (as the Apoſtle ſpeaks) doth defile all the reſt, 'tis a mire in the ſpring although the pipes are cleanſed, they will grow quickly fowl again; ſo Chriſtians in their progreſs in grace, would eye this moſt, that the Conſcience be growing purer, the heart more ſpiritual, the affections more regular, and heavenly, and their outward carriage will be holier, whereas the outward work of performing duties

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and being much exercis'd in Religion, may by the neglect of this, be labour in vain, and amend nothing foundly. To ſet the outward Actions right, though with an honeſt Intention, and not ſo to regard and find out the inward diſorder of the Heart, whence that in the Actions flows, is but to be ſtill putting the Handle of a Clock right with your Finger, while 'tis foul or out of order within, which is a continual buſineſs and does no good. Oh! but a purified Conſcience, a Soul renew'd and refin'd in its temper and affections, will make things go right without, in all the duties and acts of our Callings.

2. The Principle of Good in both is Chriſt. *Your good Converſation in Chriſt.* The Converſation not good unleſs in him, ſo neither the Conſcience.

1. He the Perſon, muſt be in him, and then the Conſcience and Converſation will be good in him, the Conſcience that is morally good, having ſome kind of vertuous Habits, yet being out of Chriſt, is nothing but pollution in the ſight of God, it muſt be waſht in his blood ere it can be clean, all our pains will not cleanſe it, floods of tears will not do it, 'tis blood, and that blood alone that hath the Vertue of *purging the Conſcience from dead Works*, Heb. 9.

2. In him the perfect pattern of Holineſs, the Heart and Life to be conformed to him, and ſo made truely good.

3. He the Spirit of Grace whence it is firſt derived, and always fed, and maintained, and made active; a Spirit goes forth from him that cleanſeth our Spirits, and ſo makes our Converſation clean and holy.

If thou wouldſt have thy Conſcience and Heart purify'd, and pacify'd, and have thy Life certify'd, go to Chriſt for all, make uſe of him, as of his blood

to

to wash of thy guiltiness, so of his spirit to purifie and sanctifie thee; if thou wouldst have thy Heart reserv'd for God, pure as his Temple, if thou wouldst have thy Lusts cast out that pollute thee, and findest no power to do it; go to him, desire him to scourge out that filthy Rable that abuse his House, and make it a Den of Thieves. Seek this as the only Way to have thy Soul, and ways righted, to be in Christ, and then walk in him: Let thy Conversation be in Christ, study him, and follow him, look on his Way, on his Graces, his Obedience, and Humility, and Meekness till by looking on them, they make the very Idea of thee new, as the Painter doth of a Face he would draw to the Life; so behold his Glory, that thou maist be *transformed from glory to glory*: but as it is there added, this must be *by the Spirit of the Lord*: do not therefore look on him simply as an example without thee, but as live within thee, having received him, walk not only like him, but in him, as the Apostle St. *Paul* speaks, and as the word is here, your Conversation not only according to Christ, but *in Christ*; *draw from his fulness Grace for Grace.*

2*dly*. The other thing in the Words is the advantage of this good Conscience and Conversation (1) Even external towards the malicious ungodly World, *they shall be ashamed that falsly accuse you*, thus often it is even most evident to men, the victory of Innocency, silent Innocency most strongly confuting all calumny, making the ungodly false accusers hide their heads; thus without stirring the Integrity of a Christian conquers, as a Rock unremoved, breaks the Waters that are dashing against it: And this not only a lawful but laudible way of revenge, shaming calumny out of it, and punishing evil-speakers by well-doing, shewing really how false their accusers were; this the power-

fullest

fulleſt Apology and Refutation ; as his was of the Sophiſter, that would prove there were no motion, by riſing up and walking. And without this good Conſcience and Converſation, we cut our ſelves ſhort of other Apologies for Religion, whatſoever we ſay for it: one unchriſtian action will diſgrace it more than we can repair by the largeſt and beſt framed Speeches on its behalf.

Let thoſe therefore that have given their names to Chriſt, honour him and their holy profeſſion moſt this way; ſpeak for him as occaſion requires; why not, providing *with meekneſs and fear*, as our Apoſtle hath taught: but let this be the main defence of Religion, live like it, and commend it ſo. Thus all ſhould do that are called Chriſtians, adorn that holy Profeſſion with holy Converſation: but the moſt are nothing elſe but ſpots and blots, ſome wallowing in the mire, and provoking one another to uncleanneſs. Oh! the unchriſtian Life of Chriſtians, an Evil to be much lamented more than all the Troubles we ſuſtain. But theſe indeed do thus deny Chriſt, and declare that they are not his: So many as have any reality of Chriſt in you, be ſo much the more holy, the more wicked the reſt are, ſtrive to make it up and to honour that name which they diſgrace; and if they will reproach you, becauſe ye walk not with them, and caſt the mire of falſe reproaches on you, take no notice, but go on your way, it will dry and eaſily rub off: be not troubled with misjudgings; ſhame them out of it by your blameleſs and holy carriage, that will do moſt to put lies out of countenance; however if they continue impudent, the day is at hand, wherein all the Enemies of Chriſt ſhall be all cloathed over and covered with ſhame, and they that have kept a good Conſcience and walked in Chriſt, ſhall lift up their faces with joy.

2*dly*.

2*dly*. There is an intrinſecal good in this goodneſs of Conſcience that ſweetens all ſufferings as follows.

Verſe 17.

17. *For it is better, if the will of God be ſo, that ye ſuffer for well-doing, then for evil-doing.*

A Neceſſity of ſuffering in any way wherein ye can walk; if ye chuſe the way of wickedneſs, you ſhall not eſcape ſuffering ſo. And that ſuppos'd, this is by far the better to ſuffer in well-doing, and for it, than to ſuffer either for doing evil, or ſimply to ſuffer in that way as the Words run.

κρεῖττον· ἔνταs πάσχειν.

1. The way of the ungodly not exempt for ſuffering even in preſent, ſetting aſide the judgement and wrath to come, often from the hands of men whether juſtly or unjuſtly, and often from the immediate hand of God always juſt, both in that and the other, cauſing the Sinner to eat of the Fruit of his own ways: When prophane ungodly men offer violences and wrongs one to another; in this God is juſt againſt both, in that wherein they themſelves are both unjuſt; they are both rebellious againſt him, and ſo though they intend not his quarrel, he means it himſelf; ſets them to laſh one another. As the wicked profeſs their combined enmity againſt the Children of God, yet they are not always at peace amongſt themſelves: They often revile and defame each other, ſo 'tis held up on both ſides, whereas the godly cannot hold them game

game in that, being like their Lord, *who when he was reviled, reviled not again.* Beſides, although the ungodly flouriſh at ſometimes, yet they have their days of ſuffering, are ſubject to the common miſeries of the life of Man, and the common calamities of evil times; the Sword and Peſtilence and ſuch like publick judgements: Now in what kind ſoever it be that they ſuffer, they are at a great diſadvantage compared with the godly in their ſufferings.

Here impure Conſciences may lie ſleeping while they are at eaſe themſelves, but when any great trouble comes and ſhakes them, then readily the Conſcience begins to awake, and buſle, and proves more grievous to them than all that comes on them from without. When they remember their deſpiſing the ways of God, neglecting him and holy things, whence they are convinc'd, how that comfort might be reapt in theſe days of diſtreſs, this cuts and galls them moſt, looking back at their licentious prophane ways, each of them ſtrikes to the heart. As the Apoſtle calls ſin, *the ſting of death*, ſo is it of all ſufferings, and the Sting that ſtrikes deepeſt into the very Soul: no ſtripes like thoſe that are ſecretly given by an accuſing Conſcience. *Surdo verbere cadit.* Juv.

A ſad condition to have from thence the greateſt anguiſh where the moſt comfort ſhould be expected, to have thickeſt darkneſs, whence they ſhould look for moſt light. Men that have evil Conſciences, love not to be with them; are not much with themſelves, as St. *Auguſtine* compares them to ſuch as have ſhrew'd Wives, love not to be at home: but yet, outward diſtreſs ſets a Man inward, as foul weather drives him home, and there where he ſhould find comfort, he is met with ſuch accuſations, as are like a continual dropping, as

Solomon ſpeaks, of a contentious Woman. It is a moſt wretched eſtate to live under ſufferings or afflictions of any kind, and a ſtranger to God; then a Man hath God, and his Conſcience againſt him that ſhould be his ſolace in times of diſtreſs, being knocked off from the comforts of the World whereon he reſted, and having no Proviſion of ſpiritual comfort within, nor expectation from above. But the Children of God in their ſufferings (eſpecially ſuch as are for God) can retire themſelves inwards, and rejoyce in the teſtimony of a good Conſcience, yea the Poſſeſſion of Chriſt dwelling within them. All the trouble that befalls them, is but as the ratling of Hail upon the Tiles of the Houſe to a man, that is ſitting within a warm Room at a rich Banquet; ſuch is a good Conſcience, a Feaſt, yea, a continual Feaſt. The Believer looks on his Chriſt, and in him reads his deliverance from condemnation, and that is a ſtrong Comfort, a Cordial that keeps him from fainting in the greateſt diſtreſſes. The Conſcience gives this teſtimony that ſin is forgiven, raiſes the Soul above inward ſufferings. Tell the Chriſtian of loſs of Goods, or Liberty, or Friends, or Life, he anſwers all with this, Chriſt is mine, and my ſin is pardoned. That's enough for me. What would I not have ſuffered to have been delivered from the wrath of God; if any ſuffering of mine in this World could have done that, now that is done to my hand. All other ſufferings are light, they are light, and but for a moment, one thought of Eternity drowns the whole time, the World's endurance, which is but as one inſtant or twinkling of an eye betwixt eternity before, and eternity after, how much leſs is any ſhort life, and a ſmall part that is ſpent in ſufferings though it were all ſufferings without interruption, which yet it is not:

when

when I look forward to the Crown, all vaniſhes, and I think it leſs than nothing. Now theſe things the good Conſcience ſpeaks to the Chriſtian in his ſufferings; therefore certainly his choice is beſt that provides it for his Companion againſt evil and troubleous times: if moral Integrity went ſo far, as truly it did much in ſome men that had much of it, that they ſcorn'd all hard Encounters, and eſteemed this a ſufficient Bulwark, a ſtrength impregnable, *Hic murus Aheneus eſto, nil conſcire ſibi*, how much more the Chriſtians good Conſcience, which alone is truly ſuch.

2. As the Chriſtian may thus look inward and rejoyce in tribulation, ſo there is another look upward that is here likewiſe mention'd, that allays very much all the ſufferings of the Saints. *If ſuch be the will of God.*

The Chriſtian mind hath ſtill one eye to this above the hand of men, and all inferiour cauſes, in ſuffering whether for the name of God or otherwiſe: Looks on the Sovereign will of God, and ſweetly complies with that in all. Neither is there any thing that doth more powerfully compoſe and quiet the mind, than this, makes it invincibly firm and content, when it hath attained this reſignment of it ſelf to the will of God, to agree to that in every thing. This is the very thing wherein tranquility of ſpirit lies; it is no riddle, nor hard to underſtand, yet few attain it. And I pray you, what is thus gained by our reluctancies and repinings, but pain to our ſelves? he doth what he will, whether we conſent or no, our diſagreeing doth not prejudge his Purpoſes but our own Peace, if we will not be led, we are drawn, we muſt ſuffer if he will, but if we will what he wills, even in ſuffering that makes it ſweet and eaſie, when our mind goes along with his,

and we willingly move with that ſtream of Providence which will carry us with it, though we row againſt it; and we ſtill have nothing but toyl and wearineſs for our pains.

But this hard Argument of Neceſſity is needleſs, to the Child of God, perſwaded of the Wiſdom and Love of his Father, knows that to be truly beſt for him that his hand reaches. Sufferings are unpleaſant to the fleſh, and it will grumble, but the Voice of the Spirit of God in his Children, is that of that good King, good is the Will of the Lord, let him do with me as ſeems good in his eyes. My fooliſh heart would think theſe things I ſuffer might be abated, but my wiſe and heavenly Father thinks otherwiſe; he hath his deſign of honour to himſelf, and good to me in theſe, which I would be loath to croſs if I might: I may do God more ſervice by theſe advantages, but doth not he know beſt what fits, cannot he advance his Grace more by the want of theſe things I deſire, than I could do my ſelf by having them? cannot he make me a gainer by Sickneſs, and Poverty, and Diſgraces, and loſs of Friends and Children, by making up all in himſelf, and teaching me more of his all-ſufficiency? yea, even concerning the Affairs of my Soul I am to give up all to his good pleaſure, though deſiring the light of his countenance above all things in this World, yet if he ſee it fit to hide it ſometimes, if that be his will, let me not murmur, there is nothing loſt by this obedient temper, yea what way ſoever he deals with us there is much more advantage in it. No Soul ſhall enjoy ſo much in all eſtates as that which hath deveſted and renounced it ſelf, and hath no will but Gods.

Verſe 18.

18. *For Chriſt hath alſo once ſuffered for ſins, the juſt for the unjuſt (that he might bring us to God) being put to death in the fleſh, but quickened by the Spirit.*

THE whole Life of a Chriſtian is a ſteady aiming at Conformity with Chriſt, ſo that in any thing, whether doing or ſuffering, there can be no Argument ſo appoſite and perſwaſive as his Example; and no obedience either active or paſſive ſo difficult, but the repreſentment of that Example will powerfully ſweeten it. The Apoſtle doth not decline the often uſe of it; here we have it thus, *for Chriſt alſo ſuffered.*

Though the Doctrine of Chriſtian ſuffering is the occaſion of ſpeaking of Chriſt's ſuffering, yet he inſiſts on it beyond the ſimple neceſſity of that Argument, for its own excellency, and further uſefulneſs, ſo we ſhall conſider the double capacity. (1.) As an encouragement and engagement for Chriſtians to ſuffer. (2.) As the great point of their Faith, whereon all their Hopes and Happineſs depends, being the means of their reduction to God.

The ſufferings of Chriſt being duely conſidered, doth much temper all the ſufferings of Chriſtians, eſpecially ſuch as are directly for Chriſt.

1. It is ſome known eaſe to the mind in any diſtreſs to look upon Examples of the like, or greater diſtreſs in preſent or former times. It diverts the eye from continual *Ferre quam ſortem patiuntur omnes.*

tinual poreing on our own ſuffering, and when we return to view it again, it leſſens it, abates of the imagined bulk and greatneſs of it. Thus publick, thus Spiritual troubles; and particularly the ſufferings and tentations of the Godly, by the conſideration of this as their common lot, their high way, not new in the Perſon of any, 1 *Cor.* 10. 13. If we trace the Lives of the moſt eminent Saints, ſhall we not find every notable ſtep that is recorded, marked with a new croſs, one trouble following on another as the Waves do in an unceſſant ſucceſſion: And is not this manifeſt in the Life of *Abraham*, and of *Jacob*, and the reſt of God's Worthies in the Scriptures; and doth not this make it an unreaſonable abſurd thought to dream of an exemption: would any one have a new untroden way cut out for him free of Thorns, and ſtrewed with Flowers all along, no contradictions nor hard meaſure from the World; or imagine that there may be ſuch a dexterity neceſſary as to keep its good will, and the friendſhip of God too, this will not be, and its an univerſal concluſion, all that will live godly in Chriſt Jeſus, muſt ſuffer perſecution; this is the Path to the Kingdom, that which all the Sons of God, the Heirs of it have gone in, even Chriſt, as that known word is, one ſon without ſin, but none without ſuffering. *Chriſt alſo ſuffered.*

Velut unda pellitur unda.

The example and company of the Saints in ſuffering is very conſiderable, but that of Chriſt is more than any other, yea, than all the reſt together. Therefore the Apoſtle having repreſented the former at large, ends in this as the top of all, *Heb.* 12. 1, 2. There is a race ſet before us, it is to be run and run with patience and without fainting: now he tells us of a cloud of Witneſſes; a cloud made up of inſtances of Believers ſuffering before us, and the heat of the day wherein we

run

run is ſomewhat cooled even by that Cloud, compaſſing us: But the main ſtrength of their comfort here lyes in beholding of Chriſt, eying of his ſufferings and their Iſſue. The conſidering and contemplating of him, will be the ſtrongeſt cordial, will keep you from wearying and fainting in the way, *v.* 3.

The ſingular power of this inſtance lyes in many particulars conſiderable in it, to ſpecifie ſome chief things briefly in the ſteps of the preſent words. (1) the Example great. *Greatneſs of the Example.*

(1) The greatneſs of the Perſon, Chriſt, and that marked to us by the manner of expreſſion [Καὶ χριστὸς] *Chriſt alſo*, beſides and beyond all others, even Chriſt himſelf. *1 The perſon.*

There can be no higher Example, not only of the Sons of Adoption ſufferers, but the begotten, the only begotten Son, the Eternal Heir of Glory in whom all the reſt have their title, their Sonſhip and Heirſhip derived from, and dependent on his: Not only all the Saints, but the King of Saints. Now who ſhall repine at ſuffering, ſhall the wretched Sons of Men refuſe to ſuffer after the Suffering of the ſpotleſs glorious Son of God, as one ſpeaks of pride, that after Majeſty, that higheſt Majeſty, to teach Humility hath ſo humbled himſelf; how wicked and imprudent a thing will it be for a worm to ſwell, to be high conceited. So thus our Lord hath taught us by ſuffering in his own perſon, and hath dignify'd ſufferings ſo, we ſhould certainly rather be ambitious than afraid of them. *Ubi ſe humiliavit majeſtas, vermiculus. inflatur & intumeſcat.* Bern.

2. The greatneſs of his ſufferings and continuance That which the Apoſtle ſpeaks here of, his once ſuffering, hath its truth taking in all, he ſuffered once, his whole life was one continued line of ſuffering from the cratch to the Croſs, all that lay betwix't *2 The Sufferings.*

twix't was ſuitable, his eſtate and entertainment throughout his whole life agreed well with ſo mean a beginning, and ſo reproachful an end of it; forc'd upon a ſlight while he could not go, and living till he appeared in publick in a very mean deſpiſed condition as the Carpenters Son; and after, his beſt works pay'd with envy and revilings, called a wine biber, and caſter out of Devils by the Prince of Devils, his life often laid in wait and ſought for. Art thou mean in thy birth, and life, deſpiſed, misjudged, and reviled on all hands, look how it was with him that had more right than thou haſt to better entertainment in the World, thou wilt not deny it was his own, *it was made by him, and he was in it, and it knew him not*, are thy friends harſh to thee, *he came unto his own, and his own received him not*, haſt thou a mean Cottage, or art drawn from it, or no dwelling, and art thou every way poor, and ill accommodate, he was as poor as thou canſt be, *and had not where to lay his head*, worſe provided than the birds and foxes. But then conſider to what a height his ſufferings roſe in the end, that moſt remarkable piece of them here meant by his once ſuffering for ſins: if thou ſhouldeſt be cut off by a violent death or in the prime of thy years, mayſt thou not look upon him as going before thee in both thoſe, and in ſo ignominious a way, ſcourged, buffetted, and ſpit on, he endured all, *he gave his back to the ſmiters*, and then as the ſame Prophet hath it, *he was numbred amongſt the tranſgreſſors*; when they had uſed him with all that ſhame, they hanged him betwixt two theeves, and they that paſſed by wagged their heads, and darted taunts at him as at a Mark fixed to the Croſs, they ſcoffed and ſaid, he ſaved others himſelf he cannot ſave, *he endured the Croſs and deſpiſed the ſhame*, ſays the Apoſtle. Thus

Iſaiah.

Thus ſee we the outſide of his ſufferings but the Chriſtian is ſubject to grievous tentations and ſad deſertions that are heavier by far than the ſufferings which indeed the Apoſtle ſpeaks of here; yet even in theſe this ſame Argument of his holds: for our Saviour is not unacquainted with, nor ignorant of either of thoſe, though ſtill without ſin, and if any of that had been in any of his ſufferings it had not furthered but undone all our Comfort in him. But tempted he was, he ſuffered that way too, and the tentations were terrible as you know; and was there not ſome ſtrong conflict when he fell down and prayed in the Garden, and ſweat drops of blood, and an Eccliſpe when he cried out on the Croſs, *my God, my God, why haſt thou forſaken me*, ſo that even in theſe we may apply this comfort, and ſtay our ſelves or Souls on him, and go to him as a compaſſionate high Prieſt, *Heb.* 4. 15, 16. *For Chriſt alſo ſuffered.*

2. Conſider the fitneſs of the example, as the ſame is every way great, yea greateſt, ſo it is fit, the fitteſt to take with a Chriſtian, to ſet before him ſo near a pattern, where he hath ſo much intereſt; as the Argument is ſtrong in it ſelf, ſo its to the new Man, the Chriſtian Man, particularly ſtrongeſt, it binds him moſt, it is not far ſetcht, but a home pattern; and as when ye perſwade Men to virtue by the Example of thoſe that they have near relation to; they are his Servants, and ſhall they, or would they think to be greater than their Maſter, to be exempt from his lot in the World, they are his Souldiers, and will they refuſe to follow him, and to endure with him? *ſuffer hardſhip*, ſays the Apoſtle to *Timothy*, *as a good Souldier of Jeſus Chriſt*: will not a word from him put a vigour in them to go after him, whither upon any march or

The fitneſs of the example.

Exemplum domeſticum.

ſervice, when he calls them friends, *commilitones*, as they tell his word that wrought ſo much on his trained bands; yea he is not aſhamed to call them brethren, and will they be aſhamed to ſhare with him and to be known by their ſuitable eſtate to be his brethren.

The advantage. 3. There is from theſe ſufferings ſuch a reſult of ſafety and comfort to a Chriſtian that makes them a moſt effectual encouragement to ſuffering, that is this, if he ſuffered once, and that was for ſin, now that heavy intollerable ſuffering for ſin once taken out of a Believers way, it makes all other ſufferings light, exceeding light, as nothing in their account. He ſuffered once for ſin, ſo that to them that lay hold on him this holds ſure, that ſin is never to be ſuffered for in the way of ſtrict Juſtice again, as not by him, ſo not by them that are in ſin; for he ſuffered for ſins once and it was for their ſins, every poor Believer's? So now the Soul finding it ſelf rid of that fear, goes merrily through all other hazzards and ſufferings.

As the Soul perplexed about that queſtion finds no relief in all others enjoyments, all Propoſitions of lower Comforts are unſavory and troubleſome to it: Tell of peace and Proſperity, ſay however the World go you ſhall have eaſe and pleaſure, and you ſhall be honoured and eſteemed by all; and though you could make a Man ſure of theſe, yet if his Conſcience be working and ſtirred about the matter of his ſin, and the wrath of God, ty'd cloſe to ſin, he will wonder at your impertinency, in that you ſpeak ſo far from the purpoſe; ſay what ye will of theſe, he ſtill asks what you mean by this, thoſe things anſwer not me, do ye think I can find Comfort in them ſo long as my ſin is unpardon'd, and there is a Sentence of Eternal Death ſtanding above my head;

I feel even an impreſs of ſomewhat of that hot Indignation, ſome flaſhes of it flying and lighting upon the face of my Soul, and how can I take pleaſure in theſe things you ſpeak of. And though I ſhould be ſenſleſs and feel nothing of this all my life, yet how ſoon ſhall I have done with it, and the delights that reach no further, and then to have Everlaſting burnings, Eternity of wrath to enter to, how can I be ſatisfyed with that eſtate. All you offer a Man in this poſture is as if ye ſhould ſet dainty fair and bring muſick with it to a Man lying almoſt preſſed to death under great weights, and ye bid him eat and be merry, but lift not off his preſſure, you do but mock the Man and add to his miſery. On the other ſide he that hath got but a view of his Chriſt and reads his own pardon in Chriſts ſufferings, he can rejoyce in this in the midſt of all other ſufferings, and look on death without apprehenſion, yea with gladneſs, the ſting is out: Chriſt hath made all pleaſant to him by this one thing, that he ſuffered once for ſins. Chriſt hath perfum'd the Croſs, and the Grave, and made all ſweet. The pardoned Man finds himſelf light, skips and leaps, and through Chriſt ſtrengthning him he can encounter with any trouble. If you think to ſhut in his Spirit within outward ſufferings, it is now as *Sampſon* in his ſtrength, able to carry away the Gates on his back that you would ſhut one withal, yea can ſubmit patiently to the Lords hands in any correction. Thou haſt forgiven my ſin, therefore deal with me as thou wilt, all is well.

1. Learn to conſider more deeply, and eſteem more highly of Chriſt and his ſuffering, to ſilence our grumbling at our petty light croſſes, for ſo they are in compariſon of his: will not the great odds of his perfect Innocency, and of his nature, and meaſure of his ſuffer-

ings, will not the ſenſe of that Redemption of our Souls from death by his death, will none of theſe, nor all of them argue us into more thankfulneſs, and love to him, and patience in our tryals; Why will we then be called Chriſtians? it is impoſſible to be fretful and malecontent with the Lord's dealing with us in any kind till firſt we have forgot how he dealt with his deareſt Son for our ſakes. But theſe things are not weigh'd by the moſt, we hear and ſpeak of them, but our hearts receive not the impreſſions of them: therefore we repine againſt our Lord and Father, and drown a hundred great bleſſings in any little touch of trouble that befalls us.

[*Enimvero non ſentient ſua qui illius vulnera intuetur* Bern. in Cant. Serm. 61.]

2. Seek ſurer intereſt in Chriſt and his ſuffering than the moſt either have attained or are aſpiring to, otherwiſe all that is here ſuffered will not eaſe or comfort thee any thing, in any kind of ſuffering, no though thou ſuffer for a good cauſe, even for his cauſe, ſtill this will be an extraneous foraign thing to thee, to tell thee of his ſufferings will work no otherwiſe with thee than ſome other common ſtory. And as in the day of peace thou regardeſt it no more, ſo in the day of thy trouble thou ſhalt receive no more comfort from it. Other things you eſteemed ſhall have no comfort to ſpeak to you, *though you perſue them with words* (as *Solomon* ſays of the poor Man's friends) *yet they ſhall be wanting to you.* And then you would ſure find how happy it were to have this to turn you to, that the Lord Jeſus ſuffered for ſins, and for yours, and therefore hath made it a light and comfortable buſineſs to you to undergo momentary paſſing ſufferings.

Days of tryal will come, do you not ſee they are on us already. Be perſwaded to turn your eyes and deſires more towards Chriſt. This is the thing we would

ſtill

ſtill preſs, the ſupport and happineſs of your Souls lyes on it. But you will not believe it. Oh! that ye knew the comforts and ſweetneſs of Chriſt. Oh that one would ſpeak that knew more of them! were you once but entered into this knowledge of him and the virtue of his ſufferings, you would account all your days but loſt wherein you have not known him; and in all times your hearts would find no refreſhment like to the remembrance of his love.

Having ſomewhat conſidered theſe ſufferings, as the Apoſtles Argument for his preſent purpoſe. Now to take nearer notice of the particulars, by which he illuſtrates them, as the main point of our Faith and Comfort: Of them here two things,

1. Their Cauſe. 2. Their Kind. Their Cauſe both their meriting cauſe and their final cauſe. 1. What in us procured theſe ſufferings unto Chriſt. 2. What thoſe his ſuffering procured unto us. Our guiltineſs brought ſuffering upon him; and his ſuffering brings us unto God.

1. The evil of ſin hath the evil of puniſhment inſeparably ty'd to it: We have a natural obligation of obedience unto God, and he juſtly urges it, ſo that where the command of his Law is broke, the Curſe of it preſently followeth. And though it was ſimply in the Power of the ſupream Lawgiver to have diſpenſed the infliction, yet having in his Wiſdom purpoſed to be known a juſt God in that way, following forth the tenor of his Law, of neceſſity there muſt be a ſuffering for ſin.

Thus the Angels that kept not their Station, falling from it, fell into a Dungeon where they are, *under chains of darkneſs, reſerved to the Judgement of the Great day*; and Man fell under the ſentence of Death: But

But in this is the difference betwixt Man and them; they were not of one, as parent or common root of the reſt, but each one fell or ſtood for himſelf alone; ſo a part of them only periſht, but Man fell altogether, ſo that not one of all the Race could eſcape condemnation, unleſs ſome other way of ſatisfaction be found out. And here it is, *Chriſt ſuffered for ſins, the juſt for the unjuſt*: *Father*, ſays he, *I have glorified thee on Earth.* In this Plot indeed do all the Divine Attributes ſhine in their full; infinite Mercy, and immenſe Juſtice, and Power, and Wiſdom: Looking on Chriſt as ordained for that purpoſe, I have found a Ranſom, *ſays the Father*, one fit to redeem Man, a Kinſman, one of that very ſame Stock, the Son of Man, one able to redeem Man by ſatisfying me, and fulfilling all I lay upon him; my Son, my only begotten Son in whom my Soul delights: And he is willing, undertakes all, ſays, *loe I come*, &c. We are agreed upon the way of this Redemption; yea, upon the Perſons to be redeemed; it is not a roving blind Bargain, a price paid, for, we know not to whom. Hear his own words; *Thou haſt given the Son* (ſays the Son to the Father) *power over all fleſh, that he ſhould give eternal life to as many as thou haſt given him*; and after all, *mine are thine, and thine are mine, and I am glorified in them.*

For the ſins of thoſe he ſuffered ſtanding in their room, and what he did and ſuffered according to the Law of that Covenant, as done and ſuffer'd by them. All the ſins of all the Elect were made up into an huge bundle and bound upon his Shoulders, ſo the Prophet ſpeaks in their name; *ſurely he hath born our griefs and carried our ſorrows*: *And the Lord laid* [*or made to meet*] *on him the iniquity of us all*; where he ſpoke of many ways of ſin, every one to his own way: he binds up all in

in the word of *iniquity* as all one ſin, as if it were that one tranſgreſſion of the firſt *Adam* that brought on the Curſe of his Seed; born by the ſecond *Adam*, to take it away from all that are his Seed, that are in him as their Root.

He the great high Prieſt appearing before God with the Names of the Elect upon his Shoulders; and in his Heart bearing them and all their burdens, and offering for them not any other Sacrifice but himſelf, charging all their Sin on himſelf, as the Prieſt did the Sins of the People on the Head of the Sacrifice. *He by the eternal Spirit*, ſays the Apoſtle, *offered up himſelf without ſpot unto God, ſpotleſs and ſinleſs*, and ſo only fit to take away our ſin, being a ſatisfactory oblation for it. He ſuffered, in him was our ranſome, and thus it was paid, in the Man Chriſt was the Deity, and ſo his blood was as the Apoſtle calls it, the Blood of God, and being pierced it came forth, and was told down as the rich price of our Redemption, *not ſilver, nor gold, nor corruptible things*, as our Apoſtle hath it before, *but the precious blood of Chriſt, as of a Lamb without blemiſh.*

Obſ. 1. Shall any Man offer to bear the Name of a Chriſtian, that pleaſes himſelf in the way of Sin, can delight and ſport himſelf with it, when he conſiders this, that Chriſt ſuffered for ſin; do not think it, you that ſtill account ſin, ſweet, which he found ſo bitter, and light, which was ſo heavy to him, and made his Soul heavy to the death; you are yet far off from him, if you were in him, and one with him, there would be ſome harmony of your hearts with his, and ſome ſympathy with theſe ſufferings, as endured by your Lord, your Head, and for you. They that with a right view ſee him as pierced by their ſins, that ſight pierces them, and makes them mourn, brings forth tears, beholding the

the guſhing forth of his blood. This makes the real Chriſtian an avowed enemy to ſin; ſhall I ever be Friends with it *(ſays he)* that killed my Lord, no, but I will ever kill it, and do it by applying his death. The true Penitent is ſworn to be the death of ſin: may be ſurprized by it, but no poſſibility of reconcilement betwixt them.

Thou that liveſt kindly and familiarly with ſin; either openly declareſt thy ſelf for it, or haſt a ſecret love for it; where canſt thou reap any comfort? not from theſe ſufferings to thee continuing in that Poſture. It is all one, as if Chriſt had not ſuffer'd for ſins; yea, worſe than if no ſuch thing had been, that there is ſalvation and terms of mercy unto thee, and yet periſhes: That there is Balm in *Gilead*, and yet thou art not healed. And if thou haſt not comfort from Jeſus crucified, I know not whence thou canſt have any that will hold out; look about thee, tell me what thou ſeeſt either in thy Poſſeſſion, or in thy hopes, that thou eſteemeſt moſt off, and layeſt thy confidence on it; or to deal more liberally with thee, ſee what eſtate thou wouldeſt chuſe for thy wiſh; ſtretch thy fancy to deviſe an earthly happineſs, theſe times are full of unquietneſs; but give thee a time of the calmeſt peace, not an air of trouble ſtirring, put thee where thou wilt, far off from fear of Sword and Peſtilence, and encompaſs thee with Children, Friends, and Poſſeſſions, and Honours, and Comfort, and Health to enjoy all thoſe, yet one thing thou muſt admit in the midſt of all theſe, within a while thou muſt die, and having no real portion in Chriſt, but a deluding dream of it, thou ſinkeſt through poſſibly that death into another death, far more terrible: of all thou enjoyeſt; nothing goes along with thee but unpardoned ſin, and that delivers

livers thee up to endleſs ſorrow. Oh! that you were wiſe and would conſider your latter end, do not ſtill gaze about you upon trifles, but yet be intreated to take notice of your Saviour, and receive him, that he may be yours, faſten your Belief and your Love on him; give him all your Heart, that ſtuck not to give himſelf an offering for your ſins.

2. To you that have fled into him for Refuge; if ſenſible of the Churches diſtreſs, be upheld with this thought, that he that ſuffered for it, will not ſuffer it to be undone, all the rage of enemies, yea, the Gates of Hell ſhall not prevail againſt it, he may for a time ſuffer them to be brought low for the ſins of his People, and other wiſe Reaſons; but he will not utterly forſake them; though there is much chaff, yet he hath a precious number in theſe Kingdoms, that he ſhed his blood for, many God hath called, and yet is to call, he will not loſe any of his flock that he hath bought ſo dear, *Acts.* 20. And for their ſake he will at one time repair our breaches and eſtabliſh his Throne in theſe Kingdoms. 2. For your ſelves, what can affright you while this is in your Eye? let others tremble at the Apprehenſion of Sword or Peſtilence, but ſure you have for them and all other hazards a moſt ſatisfying anſwer in this, My Chriſt hath ſuffered for ſin, I am not to fear that, and that ſet aſide, I know the worſt is but death, I am wrong, truly that is the beſt, to be diſſolv'd and to be with Chriſt is [πολλῷ γὰρ μᾶλλον χρεῖσσον] *much more better.* *Rom.* 5. 1, 2, 3.

This were a happy Eſtate indeed, but what ſhall they think that have no aſſurance, thoſe that doubt that Chriſt is their's, and that he ſuffered for their ſins? I know no way but believe on him, and then you ſhall know that he is yours: from this is the grand

miſtake of many; they would firſt know that Chriſt is theirs, and they would believe, which cannot be, before he becomes ours by believing. *It* is that gives title and propriety to him; he is ſet before Sinners as a Saviour that hath ſuffered for ſin, that they look to him and be ſaved, that they lay over their Souls on him, and then they may be aſſured he ſuffer'd for them.

Say then, what is it that ſcares thee from Chriſt, this thou ſeeſt is a poor groundleſs exception, for he is ſet before thee as a Saviour to believe on, that ſo he may be thy Saviour; why wilt thou not come unto him? why refuſeth thou to believe? art thou a ſinner? art thou unjuſt? then he is fit for thy caſe, he ſuffered for Sins. *the Juſt for the Unjuſt*. Oh, but ſo many and ſo great ſins! yea, is that it, it is true indeed, and good reaſon thou think ſo. But, 1. Conſider if they be excepted in the Proclamation of Chriſt, the Pardon that comes in his Name, if not, if he make no exception, why wilt thou? 2. Conſider if thou wilt call them greater than this Sacrifice, *he ſuffered*. Take due notice of the greatneſs and worth, 1. Of his Perſon, and thence of his Sufferings, and thou wilt not dare to ſay thy ſin goes above the value of his ſuffering, or that thou art too unjuſt for him to juſtifie thee, be as unrighteous as thou canſt be, art thou convinced of it? then know that Jeſus the Juſt, is more Righteous than thy unrighteouſneſs: And after all is ſaid, that any ſinner hath to ſay, they are yet without exception *bleſſed, that truſt in him.*

That he might bring us to God.] It is a chief Point of Wiſdom, to proportion means to their end: therefore the all-wiſe God in putting his only Son to ſo hard a task, had a high end in this, and this was it, *That he might bring us unto God.* In this three things, (1.) The Nature

Nature of this good, nearneſs unto God. (2.) Our deprivement of it, by our own ſin. (3.) Our reſtorement to it, by Chriſts ſufferings.

1. God hath ſuited every Creature he hath made with a convenient good to which it tends; and in the obtainment of which it reſts and is ſatisfied. Natural bodies have each their own natural place, whether, if not hindred, they move unceſſantly till they be in it; and there declare by reſting there, that they are (as I may ſay) where they would be. Senſitive Creatures are carried to ſeek a ſenſitive good as agreeable to their rank and being, and attaining that, aim no further. Now in this is the Excellency of Man; he is made capable of a Communion with his Maker, and becauſe capable of it, is unſatisfied without it. The Soul a Being cut out (ſo to ſpeak) to that largeneſs, cannot be fill'd with leſs, though he is fallen from his right to that good, and from all right deſire of it, yet not from a capacity of it, no, nor from a neceſſity of it, for the anſwering and filling of his capacity.

Though the Heart once gone from God, turns continually further away from him, and moves not towards him till it be renewed: yet ever in that wandering, it retains that natural relation to God as its Center, that it hath no true reſt elſewhere, nor cannot by any means find it: It is made for him, and is therefore ſtill reſtleſs till it meet with him.

It is true, the Natural Man takes much pains to quiet his Heart by other things, and digeſts many vexations with hopes of contentment in the end, and accompliſhment of ſome deſign he hath, but ſtill they miſgive. Many times he attains not the thing he ſeeks, but if he do, yet never attains the ſatisfaction he ſeeks and expects in it, only learns from that to deſire ſomething

farther, and ſtill hunts on after a fancy, drives his own ſhadow before him, and never overtakes it, and if he did, yet its but a ſhadow ; and ſo in running from God, beſides the ſad end, he carries an interwoven puniſhment with his ſin, the natural diſquiet and vexation of his Spirit, fluttering too and fro, no reſt for the ſole of his foot: The matters of unconſtancy and vanity covering the whole Face of the Earth.

We ſtudy to abaſe our ſouls, and to make them content with leſs than they are made for ; yea, we ſtrive to make them carnal ; that they may be pleaſed with ſenſible things ; and in this men attain a brutiſh content for a time ; forgetting their higher good ; but certainly we cannot think it ſufficient, and that no more were to be deſired beyond Eaſe, and Plenty, and Pleaſures of Senſe, for then a Beaſt in good Caſe and a good Paſture, might conteſt with us in point of Happineſs, and carry it away for that ſenſitive good he enjoys without ſin, and without the vexation that is mixt with us all. Theſe things are too groſs and heavy.

The Soul, the immortal Soul deſcended from Heaven muſt either be more happy, or remain miſerable. The higheſt increated Spirit is the proper Good, the Father of Spirits that pure and full good, raiſes the Soul above it ſelf ; whereas all other things draw it down below it ſelf. So then its never well with the Soul, but when it is near unto God, yea, in its union with him, married to him, and miſmatching it ſelf elſewhere, it hath never any thing but ſhame and ſorrow. *All that forſake thee ſhall be aſhamed*, Jer. 17. ſays the Prophet: and the *Pſalmiſt*, Pſal. 73. *They that are far off from thee ſhall periſh.* And this is indeed our natural miſerable condition, and is often expreſt this way, or eſtrangedneſs and diſtance from God, *Eph.* 2. *Gentiles*, far off by

by their profeſſion and Nation, but both Jews and Gentiles far off by their natural Foundation, and both brought near by the blood of the new Covenant; and that is the other thing here implied, that we are far off by reaſon of ſin; otherways there were no need of Chriſt, eſpecially in this way of ſuffering for ſin, to bring us unto God.

The firſt, becauſe of Gods command, ſin broke off Man and ſeparated him from God, and ever ſince the Soul remains naturally remote from God. (1.) Under a ſentence of Exile pronounced by the Juſtice of God, condemned to baniſhment from God, who is the life and light of the Soul as it is of the Body. (2.) It's under a flat impoſſibility of returning by it ſelf. And that in two reſpects. (1.) Becauſe of the guiltineſs of ſin ſtanding betwixt, as an unpaſſable Mountain or Wall of ſeparation. (2.) Becauſe of the Dominion of ſin keeping the Soul captive, ſtill drawing it further off from God, increaſing the diſtance and the enmity every day. Nor in Heaven, nor under Heaven, no way to remove this enmity, and make up this diſtance, and return Man to the Poſſeſſion of God, but this one, by Chriſt and him ſuffering for ſins.

He endured the Sentence pronounced againſt man; yea, even in this particular Notion of it, one main ingredient in his ſuffering was a forſaking to ſenſe, that he cried out of. And by ſuffering the Sentence pronounc'd, he took away the guiltineſs of ſin: he himſelf being ſpotleſs and undefiled, for ſuch an High Prieſt became us; the more defiled we were, the more need of an undefiled Prieſt, and Sacrifice, and he was both: Therefore the Apoſtle here very fitly mentions this qualification of our Saviour as neceſſary for reducing us unto God, *the Juſt for the Unjuſt*, ſo taking on him, and taking away the guilt of ſin, ſetting his

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ſtrong ſhoulder to remove that Mountain, he made way, or acceſs for Man unto God.

This the Apoſtle hath excellently, *Eph.* 2. *He hath reconciled us by his croſs, having ſlain the enmity*; he kill'd the quarrel betwixt God and us, killed it by his death, brings the Parties together, and hath laid a ſure Foundation of Agreement in his own Sufferings, appeaſes his Fathers wrath by them, and by the ſame appeaſes the Sinners Conſcience. All that God hath to ſay in point of Juſtice is anſwered there; all that the poor humbled ſinner hath to ſay, is anſwered too. Offered up ſuch an Attonement as ſatisfies the Father; ſo he is content that ſinners come in and be reconciled: and then Chriſt gives notice of this to the Soul to remove all Jealouſies: it is full of fear, though it would, dare not approach unto God, apprehending him a conſuming Fire. They that have done the offence, are uſually the hardeſt to reconcile, becauſe they are ſtill in doubt of their pardon, but Chriſt aſſures of a full and hearty forgiveneſs, quenching the flame and wrath of God by his blood. No, ſays Chriſt, upon my Warrant come in, you will now find my Father otherwiſe than you imagin, he hath declared himſelf ſatisfied at my hands, and is willing to receive you, to be heartily, and throughly Friends, never to hear a word more of the quarrel that was betwixt you, a full Oblivion. And if the Soul bear back ſtill through diſtruſt, he takes it by the hand and draws it forward, leads it into his Father, as the word προσαγάγη imports, preſents it to him, and leaves not the matter till it be made a full and ſure agreement.

But for this purpoſe that the Soul may be able and willing to come unto God, the ſufferings of Chriſt take away that other Impediment: as they ſatisfie the Sentence

ſentence, and ſo remove the guiltineſs of ſin, ſo he hath by them purchaſed a deliverance from the tyrannous power of ſin, that detains the Soul from God after all the way made for it. And he hath a power of applying his Sufferings to the Souls deliverance in that kind too, he opens the Priſon Doors to them that are led Captive; and becauſe the great chain is upon the heart willingly enthralled in ſin, he by his Sovereign power takes off that, frees the heart from the love of ſin, ſhews what a baſe ſlaviſh condition it is in, by repreſenting in his effectual way the goodneſs of God, his readineſs to entertain a returning ſinner, the ſweetneſs and happineſs of Communion with him; powerfully perſwades the heart to ſhake off all, and without further delay to return unto God, as to be received into favour and friendſhip, ſo to walk in the way of friendſhip with God, to give up it ſelf to his Obedience, to diſdain the vile ſervice of ſin, and live ſutable to the dignity of fellowſhip and Union with God.

And there is no other but the power of Chriſt alone that is able to effect this, to perſwade a ſinner to return, to bring home a heart unto God: Common mercies of God, though they have a leading faculty to repentance, *Rom.* 2. yet the rebellious heart will not be led by them. The Judgements of God publick or perſonal, though they ſhould drive us to God, yet the heart unchanged runs the farther from God? do we not ſee it by our ſelves and other ſinners about us, look not at all towards him that ſmites, much leſs return, or if any ſadder thoughts ariſe that way upon the ſurprize of an affliction, how ſoon vaniſh they, whether the ſtroke abateing, or the heart by time growing hard and ſenſleſs under it. Indeed where it is renewed and brought in by Chriſt, then all other things have a

ſanctified

ſanctified influence according to their quality to ſtir up a Chriſtian to ſeek after nearer Communion, cloſer walk, and more acceſs to God: But leave Chriſt out, I ſay, all other means work not this way, neither the works, nor word of God ſounded daily in his ear, return, return. Let the noiſe of the rod ſpeak it too, and both joyn together to make the cry the louder, yet the wicked will do wickedly, will not hearken to the voice of God, will not ſee the hand of God lifted up, will not be perſwaded to go in and ſeek peace and reconcilement with God, though declaring himſelf provoked to puniſh, and to behave himſelf as an enemy againſt his own people. How many are there that in their own particular have been very ſharply laſht with divers ſcourges on their bodies, or families, and yet are never a whit the nearer God for it all, hearts as proud, and earthly, and vain, as ever, and lay on as much and they will ſtill be the ſame. Only a Divine Vertue going forth from Chriſt lifted up, draws Men unto him, and being come to him he brings them unto the Father.

Obſ. 1. You that ſtill are Strangers to God who declare your ſelves to be ſo, live as Strangers far off from him; do not ſtill continue to abuſe your ſelves ſo grolly. Can you think there is any conſolation yours, that is in the ſufferings of Chriſt, while it is ſo evident they have not gained their end upon you, have not brought you to God? Truly moſt of you ſeem to think that our Lord Jeſus ſuffered rather to the end we might neglect God and diſobey him ſecurely than to reduce us to him. Hath he purchas'd you a liberty to ſin, or is not deliverance from ſin, which alone is true liberty, the thing he aimed at, and agreed for, and laid down his life for.

2. Why

2. Why let we ſtill his blood run in vain as to us? He hath by it opened up our way to God, and yet we refuſe to make uſe of it, Oh! how few come in. They that are brought unto God and received into friendſhip with him, they entertain that friendſhip, they delight in his company, love to be much with him: is it ſo with us? 2. By being ſo they become like him, know his will daily better and grow more ſutable to it; in the moſt nothing of this.

3. But even they that are brought unto God may be faulty in this, in part not applying ſo ſweet a Priviledge, can comply and be too friendly with the vain World, can paſs many days without a lively Communion with God, not aſpiring to the increaſe of that as the thing our Lord hath purchas'd for us, and that wherein all our happineſs and welfare lyes here and hereafter: your hearts cleaving to folly and not delighting your ſelves in the Lord, not refreſht with this nearneſs to him and Union with him, your thoughts not often on it, and your ſtudy to walk conform to it: Certainly it ought to be this and you would be perſwaded to endeavour it may be thus with you.

4. Remember this for your Comfort that you, as are brought unto God by Jeſus Chriſt, you are kept in that Union by him, its a firmer knot than the firſt was, there is no power of hell can diſſolve it. He ſuffered once to bring us once unto God, never to depart again, as he ſuffered once for all ſo we are brought once for all: We may be ſenſibly nearer at one time than another, but yet we can never be ſeparate nor cut off, being once knit by Chriſt as the bond of our Union. *Neither Principalities, nor Powers, &c. ſhall be able to ſeparate us from the love of God,* becauſe it holds in Chriſt Jeſus our Lord.

Being put to death in the fleſh, but quickned by the Spi-

 rit.]

rit.] The true life of a Chriſtian is to eye Chriſt, every ſtep of his life, both as his rule, and as his ſtrength, looking to him as his pattern, both in doing, and ſuffering, and drawing power from him for going through both; for the look of Faith doth that, fetches life from Jeſus to enable it for all, being without him able for nothing. Therefore the Apoſtle doth ſtill ſet this before his Brethren, and here having mentioned his ſuffering in general, the condition and end of it, he ſpecifies the particular kind of it, that which was the utmoſt, *put to death in the fleſh*, and then adds this iſſue out of it, *Quickned by the Spirit.*

The ſtrongeſt engagement, and the ſtrongeſt encouragement, he our head crowned with Thorns, and ſhall the body look for Garlands? We redeemed from hell and Condemnation by him, and can any ſuch refuſe any Service he calls them to? they that are waſht in the Lambs blood will follow him whereſoever he goes, and following him through they ſhall find their Journeys end overpay all the troubles and ſufferings of the way; *Theſe are they*, ſaid he to *John*, *which came out of great tribulation*, tribulation and great tribulation, yet they came out of it and glorious too, arrayed in *long white robes.* The ſcarlet Strumpet (as follows) in that Book, died her Garments red in the blood of the Saints: But this is their happineſs that their Garments are waſht white in the blood of the Lamb.

Once take away ſin, and all ſuffering is light, now that is done by this his once ſuffering for ſin, they that are in him ſhall hear no more of that as condemning them, binding them over to ſuffer that wrath that is due to ſin. Now this puts an invincible ſtrength into the Soul for all other things how hard ſoever.

Put to death.] This the utmoſt point, and that which

which Men are moſt ſtartled at, *to die*, and a violent death, *put to death*, and yet he hath led in this way, who is the Captain of our Salvation. *In the fleſh.*] Under this ſecond, his humane Nature, and Divine Nature and power are differenced. *Put to death in the fleſh*, a very fit expreſſion, not only (as is uſual) taking the fleſh for the whole Manhood, but becauſe death is moſt properly ſpoken of that very perſon, or his fleſh, the whole Man ſuffers death, a diſſolution or taking a pieces; and the Soul ſuffers a ſeparation or diſlodging; but death, or the privation of life and ſenſe, particularly to the fleſh or body: but the *Spirit* here oppoſed to the *fleſh* or body, is certainly of a higher Nature and Power than is the Humane Soul, which cannot of it ſelf return and reinhabit and quicken the body.

Put to Death.] His death was both voluntary and violent, that ſame power that reſtored his life, could have kept it exempted from death; but the deſign was for death: he therefore took our fleſh, to put it off thus, and offered it up as a Sacrifice; which to be acceptable, muſt of neceſſity be free and voluntary; and in that ſenſe he is ſaid to have died even by that ſame Spirit, that here, in oppoſition to death, is ſaid to quicken him, Heb. 9. 14. *Through the eternal Spirit, he offered himſelf without ſpot unto God.* They accounted it an ill boding ſign when the Sacrifices came conſtrainedly to the Altar, and drew back; and on the contrary were glad in the hopes of ſucceſs when they came chearfully forward; but never Sacrifice came ſo willingly all the way, and from the firſt ſtep knew whether he was going. Yet becauſe no other Sacrifice would ſerve, he was moſt content. *Sacrifices and burnt Offerings thou didſt not deſire: Then ſaid I, loe I come*, &c. Was not only a willing Sacrifice as *Iſaac*, bound peaceably and laid

on the Altar, but his own Sacrificer: the Beasts if they came willingly, yet offered not themselves, but he offered up himself, and thus not only by a willingness far above all those Sacrifices of Bullocks and Goats, but by the eternal Spirit offered up himself. Therefore he says in this regard, *I lay down my life for my sheep*, it is not pull'd from me, but I lay it down, and so it is often expres't, by [ἀπέθανε] *he died*; and yet this suites with it [θανατωθεὶς] *put to death*: yea, it was also expedient to be thus, that his death should be violent, and so the more penal, carry the more clear expression of a punishment, and such a violent death as had both ignominy and a Curse tyed to it, and this inflicted in a judicial way (though as from the hands of Men most unjustly) that he should stand, and be Judged, and Condemned to Death as a guilty Person, carrying in that the Persons of so many that should otherwise have fallen under Condemnation as indeed guilty, *he was numbred with transgressors* (as the Prophet hath it) *bearing the sins of many*.

Thus then there was in his Death, external violence joyned with internal willingness: But what is there to be found but Complications of Wonders in our Lord Jesus. O! high inconceivable mystery of Godliness, *God manifested in the flesh*, nothing in this World so strange, and sweet as that conjuncture, *God Man, humanitas Dei*, what a strong Foundation of Friendship and Union betwixt the Persons of Man and God, that their natures met in so close embraces in one Person. And then look on, and see so poor and despised an outward condition through his life; yet having hid under it, the Majesty of God, *all the brightness of the Fathers Glory*. And this the top of all, that he was put to Death in the flesh, the Lord of life dying, the Lord of Glory

Glory cloathed with ſhame. But it quickly appeared what kind of Perſon it was that died, by this, *he was put to Death indeed in the fleſh, but quickned by the Spirit.*

Quickned.] He was indeed too great a morſel for the Grave to digeſt, for all its vaſt craving mouth, and devouring appetite crying *give, give*, yet forced to give him up again, as the fiſh that Prophet, who in that was the figure of him, the Chains of that Priſon are ſtrong; but he was too ſtrong a Priſoner to be held by them, as our Apoſtle hath it, in his Sermon, that it was not poſſible that he ſhould be kept by them. They thought all was ſure, when they had rolled to the Stone, and ſealed it; that then the Grave had indeed ſhut her mouth upon him; it appeared a done buſineſs to them, and lookt very compleat-like in his Enemies eyes, and very deſperate-like to his Friends, his poor Diſciples and Followers, were they not near the point of giving over when they ſaid, *This is the third day*, &c. *And we thought this had been he that ſhould have delivered Iſrael.* And yet he was then with them, who was indeed the Deliverer and Salvation of *Iſrael*; that rolling of the Stone to the Grave, was as if they had rolled it towards the *Eaſt* in the night, to ſtop the riſing of the Sun the next Morning; much further above all their Watches, and power was this Sun of Righteouſneſs in his riſing again. That body that was entomb'd, was united to the Spring of Life, the Divine Spirit of the Godhead that quickened it. *Sheol.* *Act.* 2.

Obſ. 1. Thus the Church which is likewiſe his Body when it ſeems undone, is brought to the loweſt Poſture, yet by vertue of that myſtical Union with Jeſus Chriſt as his Natural Body, by perſonal Union with his Deity, ſhall be preſerved from deſtruction, and ſhall be delivered

and

and raiſed in due time. Yet as he was neareſt his exaltation in the loweſt ſtep of his Humiliation; ſo is it with his Church, when things are brought to the moſt hopeleſs appearance, then ſhall light ariſe out of darkneſs. *Cum duplicantur lateres venit Moſes.*

Therefore as we ought to ſeek more humble Senſe of *Sions* diſtreſs, ſo withal, not to let go this hope, that her mighty Lord will in the end be glorious in her deliverance, and all her ſufferings and low eſtate ſhall be as a dark Soil to ſet off the luſture of her reſtorement; when the Lord ſhall viſit her with Salvation. As in the riſing of Jeſus Chriſt, his Almighty Power and Deity, was more manifeſted than if he had not died; and therefore we may ſay confidently with the *Pſalmiſt* to his Lord, Pſal. 71. *Thou which haſt ſhewed me great and ſore troubles, ſhall quicken me again, and ſhall bring me up from the depths of the Earth: thou ſhalt increaſe my greatneſs, and comfort me on every ſide:* Yea, the Church comes more beautiful out of the deepeſt diſtreſs, let it be overwhelmed with waves, yet it ſinks not: but riſes up as only waſht: And in this confidence we ought to rejoyce, even in the midſt of our ſorrows, and though we live not to ſee them, yet even in beholding afar off, to be gladed with the great things the Lord will do for his Church in theſe later times, he will certainly make bare his holy Arm in the Eyes of the Nations, and *all the ends of the Earth ſhall ſee the Salvation of our God.* Iſa. 52. His King that he hath ſet on his holy Hill, ſhall grow in his Conqueſts and Glory, and all that riſe againſt him *ſhall he break with a Rod of Iron.* Pſal. 2. Iſa. 52. He was humbled once, but his glory ſhall be for ever, as many were aſtoniſhed at him, his Viſage being mar'd more than any Man; they ſhall be as much aſtoniſhed at his Beauty and Glory, ſo ſhall he ſprinkle many Nations, and Kings ſhall ſhut their

their mouths at him. According as here, we find that remarkable evidence of his Divine Power, in riſing from the dead, *put to death in the Fleſh, but quickened by the Spirit.*

2. Thus a believing Soul at the loweſt, when to its own ſenſe, it is given over unto death, and ſwallowed up of it, as it were in the Belly of Hell, yet look up to this Divine Power, him whoſe Soul was not left there, will not leave thine there. Yea, when thou art moſt ſunk in thy ſad apprehenſions, and far off to thy thinking, then is he neareſt to raiſe and comfort thee, as ſometimes it grows darkeſt immediately before day. Reſt on his power and goodneſs which never failed any that did ſo: *It is he* (as *David* ſays) *that liſts up the Soul from the Gates of Death.*

3. Would any of you be cured of that common Diſeaſe, the fear of Death, look this way, and you ſhall find more than you ſeek, you ſhall be taught, not only not to fear, but to love it. Conſider, (1.) His Death, *He died*, by that, thou that receiveſt him as thy life, maiſt be ſure of this, that thou art by that his death, freed from the ſecond death; and that's the great Point, let that have the name which was given to the other, *the moſt terrible of all terrible things*; and as the ſecond death is removed, this death that thou art to paſs through, is, I may ſay, beautified and ſweetned, the ugly Viſage of it becomes amiable, when ye look on't in Chriſt, and in his death, that puts ſuch a pleaſing comelineſs upon it, that whereas others fly from it with affrightment, the Believer cannot chuſe but embrace it: longs to lie down in that Bed of Reſt, ſince his Lord lay in it, and hath warmed that cold Bed, and purified it with his fragrant Body. 2. But eſpecially looking forward to his return, thence quickened by the Spirit; this being to thoſe

Deſcendit huc vita noſtra, & tulit mortem noſtram, & occidit eam de abundantia vitæ ſuæ, &c. Aug.

thoſe that are in him, the certain pledge, yea, the effectual Cauſe of that bleſſed Reſurrection, that is in their hopes; there is that Union betwixt them, that they ſhall riſe by the communication and vertue of his riſing, not ſimply by his Power, ſo the wicked to their grief ſhall be raiſed, but they by his life, as theirs: Therefore is it ſo often re-iterated, *Jo.6.* where he ſpeaks of himſelf as living, and Life-giving Bread to Belivers, adds I will raiſe them up at the laſt day. This comfort we have even for the houſe of Clay we lay down, and for our more conſiderable part, our immortal Souls; this his death and riſing hath provided for them at their diſlodging, entring into that Glory where he is. Now if theſe things were lively apprehended and laid hold on, Chriſt made ours, and the firſt Reſurrection manifeſt in us, quickened by his ſpirit to newneſs of life, certainly there would not be a more wellcome and refreſhing thought, nor a ſweeter diſcourſe to us than that of death; and no matter for the kind of it; were it a violent death? ſo was his. Were it that we account moſt judgement like amongſt diſeaſes, the plague? was not his death very painful? and was it not an accurſed death? and by that curſe endured by him in his, is not the Curſe taken away to the Believer? Oh! how wellcome ſhall that day be, that day of Deliverance, to be out of this woeful Priſon; I regard not at what Door I go out at, being at once freed from ſo many deaths, and ſet in to enjoy him, who is my life.

Verſes 19, 20, 21.

19. *By which alſo he went and preached unto the ſpirits in priſon.*

20. *Which ſometime were diſobedient, when once the long-ſuffering of God waited in the days of* Noah, *while the Ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is, eight ſouls were ſaved by water.*

21. *The like figure whereunto, even Baptiſm, doth alſo now ſave us (not the putting away of the filth of the fleſh, but the anſwer of a good Conſcience towards God,) by the Reſurrection of Jeſus Chriſt.*

THere is nothing that ſo much concerns a Chriſtian to know as the excellency of Jeſus Chriſt, his Perſon, and Works, ſo that it is always pertinent to inſiſt much on that Subject. The Apoſtle having ſpoken of this Spirit, or Divine Nature, and the power of it, raiſing him from the Dead, takes occaſion to ſpeak of another work of that Spirit, to wit, the emiſſion and publiſhing of his Divine Doctrine, and that, not as a new thing following his Death, and Riſing; but as the ſame in ſubſtance, by the ſame Spirit promulgate long before, even to the firſt Inhabitants of the World. Quickned by the Spirit, that is in our days, ſays the

Apoſtle: but then long before that, by the ſame Spirit, he went and preached to the Spirits that were in Priſon.

This place is ſomewhat obſcure in it ſelf, as it uſually falls, but made more ſo, by the various fancies and conteſts of Interpreters, aiming or pretending to clear it, theſe I like never to make a noiſe of. That dream of the deſcent of Chriſts Soul into Hell, though they that are in it, think this place founds ſomewhat that way, yet it proves, being examined, no way ſutable, cannot by the ſtrongeſt wreſting be drawn to fit their purpoſe: For (1.) That it was to preach that he went thither they are not willing to avow; though the end they give it, is as groundleſs and imaginary as this is. (2.) They would have his buſineſs to be with the Spirits of the Faithful deceaſed before his coming, here we ſee its with the diſobedient. (3.) And his Spirit here is the ſame with the ſenſe of the foregoing words, which means not his Soul, but his eternal Deity. (4.) nor is it the Spirits that were in Priſon, as they read it, but the Spirits in Priſon, which by the oppoſition of their former condition ſometimes, or formerly diſobedient, doth clearly ſpeak their preſent condition, as the juſt conſequent and fruit of their diſobedience.

Other miſinterpretations I mention not, taking it as agreeable to the whole ſtrain of the Apoſtles words,

* That Jeſus Chriſt did before his appearing in the Fleſh ſpeak by his Spirit in his Servants to thoſe of the foregoing Ages; yea the Antienteſt of them; declaring to them the way of life though rejected by the unbelief of the moſt part. This is interjected in the mentioning of Chriſts ſufferings, and

* *Thus I then thought, But do now apprehend another ſenſe as probable, if not more, even that ſo much rejected by moſt Interpreters. The miſſion of the Spirit and Preaching of the Goſpel by it, after his Reſurrection; Preaching to ſinners, and converting them according to the Prophecy which he firſt fulfilled in Perſon, and after more amply in*

and exaltment after them. And after all, the Apoſtle returns to that again, and to exhortation, which he ſtrengthens by it: But ſo as this diſcourſe taken in, is pertinently adapted to the preſent Subject. The Apoſtles aim in it, we may conceive to be this, (his main ſcope being to encourage his Brethren in the faith of Chriſt, and way of holineſs, againſt all oppoſition and hardſhip) ſo to inſtruct his Brethren in Chriſt's perpetual influence into his Church in all Ages, even before his Incarnation, as that they ſee withal, the great unbelief of the World; yea their oppoſing of Divine Truth and the ſmall number of thoſe that receive it, and ſo not be diſcouraged by the fewneſs of their number, and the hatred of the World, finding that Salvation in Jeſus Chriſt dead and riſen again, which the reſt miſs off by their own wilful refuſal. And this very point he inſiſts on clearly in the following Chap. *ver.* 3, 4. And thoſe very ways of ungodlineſs there ſpecified, which Believers renounce, was thoſe that the World was guilty of in theſe days, and in which they were ſurpriſed by the flood, *they Eat and Drank till the flood came upon them.*

his Apoſtles. That Prophecy I mean Iſa. 60. 1. *The Spirit upon him, and it was ſent from him on his Apoſtles to preach to Spirits in Priſon, to preach liberty to thoſe Captives, Captive Spirits; and therefore called Spirits in Priſon to illuſtrate the thing the more, by oppoſition to that Spirit of Chriſt, the Spirit of liberty, ſetting them free; and this to ſhew the greater efficacy of Chriſts preaching than of* Noahs, *tho he a ſignal preacher of righteouſneſs, yet only himſelf and his Family, eight Perſons, ſaved by him, but multitudes of all Nations by the Spirit and preaching of Chriſt in the Goſpel, and that by the Seal of Baptiſm, and the Reſurrection of Chriſt repreſented in the return from the water, and our dying with him by immerſion, and that figure of Baptiſm like their Ark.*

In the words of theſe three Verſes we have three things 1. An aſſertion concerning the preaching of Chriſt, and the perſons he preacht to. 2. The deſignment and deſcription of the time or age wherein that was, and

the particular way of God's dealing with them. 3. The adapting or applying of the example to Chriſtians. The firſt in theſe words which I take together, *By thee which Spirit he went and preached to the Spirits in Priſon, which ſometime were diſobedient.*

In theſe words we have a Preacher and his hearers. Of the Preacher we ſhall find here; 1. His ability. 2. His activity in the uſe of it. His ability altogether ſingular and matchleſs; the very Spring of all abilities, the Spirit of wiſdome himſelf being the co-eternal Son of God: That Spirit he preacht by, was it by which he raiſed himſelf from the dead, and without this Spirit there is no preaching; Now he was as our Apoſtle calls him, *a Preacher of righteouſneſs*, but it was the power of this Spirit; for in him did this Spirit Preach. The Son is the wiſdom of the Father, his Name is the Word: not only for that by him all things were created, as *John* hath it, the Son that power, by which, as by the word of his mouth, all things were made, but the Word likewiſe as revealing him; declaring to us the counſel and will of God, therefore by the ſame Evangeliſt, in the ſame place, called that light that illuminates the World, without which Man called the leſſer World, the intellectual World, were as the greater World without the Sun: and all that bring aright the Doctrine of ſaving wiſdom, derive it neceſſarily from him; all Preachers draw from this Soveraign Preacher, as the Fountain of Divine light, as all the Stars receive their light from the Sun, and by that diffuſing amongſt them, it is not diminiſht in the Sun, but only communicated to them, remaining ſtill full and entire in it, as its ſource: ſo doth the Spirit flow from Chriſt in a particular degree unto thoſe he

he ſends forth in his name, and its in them that he preaches by the power and light of his Eternal Spirit.

Hither then muſt they all come that would be rightly ſupplyed and enabled for that work. It is impoſſible to ſpeak duly of him in any meaſure, but by his Spirit; there muſt be particular acceſs, and a receiving of inſtructions from him, and a transfuſion of his Spirit into ours. Oh! were it thus with us, how ſweet were it to ſpeak of him. To be much in prayer, much dependance on him, and drawing from him would do much more in this, than reading and ſtudying, ſeeking after arts and Tongues, and Common Knowledge: Theſe not to be deſpiſed nor neglected. *Reading good, and learning good, but above all anoynting neceſſary, that anoynting that teacheth all things.* And you that are for your own intereſt be earneſt with this Lord, this Fountain of Spirit, to let forth more of it upon his meſſengers in theſe times; you would receive back the fruit of it, were ye buſie this way, you ſhould find more life and refreſhing ſweetneſs in the word of life, how weak and worthleſs ſo ever they were that brought it, it ſhould deſcend as ſweet ſhowers upon the Valleys and make them fruitful.

Utilis lectio, utilis eruditio, ſed magis unctio neceſſaria, quippe quæ ſola docet de omnibus. Bern.

2. By this Spirit, its ſaid here, *he preacht*, not only did he ſo in the Days of his abode on Earth, but in all times both before, and after, never left his Church altogether deſtitute of ſaving light, which he diſpenced himſelf, and conveyed by the hands of his Servants therefore its ſaid, *he preacht*, that this be no excuſe for times after he is aſcended into Heaven, no nor for times before he deſcended to the Earth in humane fleſh, though he preached not then, nor does now in his fleſh,

yet

yet by his Spirit he then preacht, and ſtill doth, ſo according to what was chief in him, he was ſtill preſent with his Church, and preaching in it, and is ſo to the end of the World. This his infinite Spirit being every where, yet 'tis ſaid here by it he went and preached, ſignifying the remarkable clearneſs of his Adminiſtration that way, as when he appears eminently in any work of his own, or taking notice of our works, God is ſaid to come down, ſo to thoſe Cities, *Gen.* 11. Let us go down. So *Exod.* 3. 8. Thus here, ſo clearly did he admoniſh them by *Noah*, coming as it were himſelf on purpoſe to declare his Mind to them. And this word, I conceive, is the rather uſed to ſhew what equality there is in this; He came indeed viſibly and dwelt amongſt Men, when he became fleſh, yet before that, he viſited by his Spirit, he went by that and preached. And ſo in after times himſelf being aſcended, and not having come viſibly in his fleſh to all, but to the Jews only: yet in the preaching of the Apoſtles to the Gentiles, as the great Apoſtle ſays of him, in this expreſſion. *Eph.* 2. 17. *He came and preached to you which were afar off*; and this he continues to do in the miniſtry of his word: and therefore ſays he, *he that deſpiſeth you, deſpiſeth me*, &c.

Were this conſidered, it could not but procure far more reſpect to the word and more acceptance of it; Would you think that in his word Chriſt ſpeaks by his eternal Spirit? yea, he comes, and preaches, addreſſes himſelf particularly to you in it, could you ſlight him thus and turn him off with daily refuſals or delays at leaſt? Think it is too long, you have ſo unworthily uſed ſo great a Lord, that brings unto you ſo great Salvation; that came once in ſo wonderful a way to work

work that Salvation for us in his fleſh, and is ſtill coming to offer it unto us by his Spirit, does himſelf preach to us, tells us what he undertook on our behalf, and how he hath performed all; and now nothing reſts but that we receive him, and believe on him, and all is ours. But alas! from the moſt, the return is, that we have here, *diſobedience*.

Sometimes diſobedient.] Two things in the hearers by which they are charactared, their preſent condition, in the time the Apoſtle was ſpeaking of them, and this by-paſt diſpoſition when the Spirit of Chriſt was preaching to them; this latter went firſt in time, and was the cauſe of the other, Therefore of it firſt.

If you look to their viſible ſubordinate Preacher a holy Man, and an able and diligent Preacher of righteouſneſs, both in his Doctrine and in the tract of his life, which is the powerfulleſt preaching, it ſeems ſtrange that he prevailed ſo little: But much more, if we look higher, this hight, as the Apoſtle points to us to look to, that Almighty Spirit of Chriſt that preacht to them; and yet they were diſobedient. The word is, they were not perſwaded, and it ſignifies both unbelief, and diſobedience, and that very fitly: unbelief being in it ſelf the grand diſobedience, the mind not yielding to Divine Truth, and ſo the ſpring of all diſobedience in affection and action. And this root of bitterneſs, this unbelief is deep ſattened in our natural hearts, and without a change in them, a taking them to pieces they cannot be good; it is as a Tree firm rooted, cannot be pluckt up without looſening the ground round about it; and this accurſed root brings forth fruit unto death; becauſe the Word is not believed, the threats of the Law, and promiſes of the Goſpel: therefore Men cleave unto their ſins, and ſpeak peace unto themſelves, while they are under the Curſe. It

It may ſeem very ſtrange that the Goſpel is ſo fruitleſs amongſt us; yea, that neither word nor rod, both preaching aloud to us the Doctrine of Humiliation and Repentance, yet perſwades any Man to return, or ſo much to turn inward, and queſtion himſelf, to ſay, what have I done? But thus it will be, till the Spirit be poured from on high, to open and ſoften hearts. It is to be deſired as much wanting in the Miniſtery of the Word, but were it there, that would not ſerve unleſs it were by a concurrent work within the Heart meeting the Word, and making the impreſſions of it there, for here we find the Spirit went and preacht, and yet the Spirits of the Hearers ſtill unbelieving and diſobedient, its a combined work of this Spirit in the Preacher and Hearers that makes it ſucceſsful, otherwiſe it is but ſhouting in a dead man's ear, there muſt be ſomething within, as one ſaid in a like caſe.

To the Spirits in Priſon.] That's now their Poſture, and becauſe he ſpeaks of them as in that Poſture, he calls them Spirits, for its their Spirits that are in that Priſon. As likewiſe calls them Spirits, that the Spirit of Chriſt preacht to, becauſe it is indeed that, that the preaching of the Word aims at, it hath to do with the Spirits of Men, is not content to be at their ear with a ſound, but works on their Minds and Spirits ſome way, either to believe and receive, or to be hardened and ſealed up to Judgement by it, which is for Rebels: If diſobedience follow on the preaching of that word, the priſon follows on that diſobedience, and that Word which they would not be bound by to obedience, binds them over to that Priſon, whence they ſhall never eſcape, nor be releaſed for ever.

Take notice of it, and know that you are warned; you will not receive Salvation, offering, preſſing it ſelf upon you. You are every day in that way of diſ-

obe-

bedience, haſtening to this perpetual Imprſonment.

Conſider you now ſit and hear this Word, ſo did theſe that are here ſpoken of; they had their time on Earth, and much patience uſed towards them, and though not to be ſwept away by a flood of Waters, yet daily carried on by the flood of times, 90 *Pſal.* and mortality: And how ſoon you ſhall be on the other ſide ſet into Eternity, you know not. I beſeech you, be yet wiſe; hearken to the offers yet made you, for in his name, I yet once again make a tender of Jeſus Chriſt, and Salvation in him to all that will let go their ſins, to lay hold on him. Oh! do not deſtroy your ſelves: you are in Priſon, he proclaims you Liberty. Chriſt is ſtill following us himſelf with treaties; Chriſt proclaims your liberty, and will you not accept of it; think though you are pleaſed with your preſent Thraldom and Priſon, it reſerves you (if you come not forth) to this other Priſon that ſhall not pleaſe you; theſe chains of ſpiritual darkneſs, in which you are, unleſs ye be freed, will deliver you up to the chains of everlaſting darkneſs, wherein theſe hopeleſs Priſoners are kept to the Judgement of the Great day: But if you will receive Jeſus Chriſt preſently, upon that, Life, and Liberty, and Bleſſedneſs is made yours. If the Son make you free, ye ſhall be free indeed.

Clamans dictis, factis, morte, vita, deſcenſu, aſcenſu clamans ut redeamus ad eum, Aug.

When once the long ſuffering of God waited in the days of Noah.] There are two main continuing wonders in the World, the bounty of God, and diſloyalty of Man: and the ſucceſſion of times is no other, but new additions of theſe two. One grand example is here ſet before us, an Oecumenical Example, as large as the whole World: much patience, and yet invincible diſobedience. Here two things in the inſtance. The Lord's general dealing with the World of the Ungodly at that time. 2. His

peculiar way with his own choſen; *Noah* and his Family: He waited patiently for all the reſt; but he effectually ſaved them.

Obſ. 1. The time deſigned thus, *in the days of Noah.* Many great and powerful Perſons in theſe days that overtopt *Noah* (no doubt) in outward reſpects, as in their ſtature, the proud Giants, and they begot Children, mighty men of old, *men of renown*, as the Text hath it: And yet as themſelves periſht in the Flood, their Names are drown'd. They had their big Thoughts certainly, that their Houſes, and their Names ſhould continue, as the *Pſalmiſt* ſpeaks, *Pſal.* 49. And yet they are ſunk in perpetual Oblivion. And *Noah's* Name, who walkt in humble obedience you ſee in theſe moſt precious Records of God's own Book, ſtill looks freſh, and ſmells ſweet, and hath this honour, that the very Age of the World is markt with this Name, to be known by it, *in the days of Noah.* That which prophane ambitious Perſons do idolatrouſly ſeek after, they are often remarkably diſappointed of, would have their names memorable and famous, yet they rot, they are either buried with them, or remembred with diſgrace, and rotting above Ground as Carcaſes un-innterr'd, and ſo are the more noiſom, as little credit to them to be mentioned, as for *Pilate* that his name is in the Confeſſion of Faith. But the name and remembrance of the righteous is ſtill ſweet and delightful: as the name of *Abraham*, the Father of the Faithful, and of *Iſaac*, and *Jacob*; their names is embalmed indeed, that they cannot rot, embalm'd with God's own Name, [*Eternal*] that name wrapt about theirs, *the God of Abraham, Iſaac, and Jacob.*

Gen. 6.

Thus *Noah* here mentioned, as preferr'd of God, and ſo in the Second Epiſtle, as a Preacher of Righteouſneſs, and *Heb.* 11. among theſe worthies whoſe honour is that they

they believed; this is only a name, a ſmall thing, not be mentioned in compariſon of their other Priviledges, and eſpecially of that venerable Life and Glory which they are Heirs to; and indeed it is a thing they regard very little, yet this we ſee, that even this advantage follows them, and flies from the vain ungodly that hunt and perſue it.

The Lord's dealing with the wicked in thoſe times before he ſwept them away by the Deluge, is in theſe two. 1. Long ſuffering, and withal clear warning; long ſuffering, *Exod.* 34. long forbearing to be angry, as the *Hebrew* Word is in his Name; which ſuppoſes a great provocation, and the continuance of it, and yet patience continuing, and in this appears the goodneſs of God, conſidering how hateful ſin is to him, and how powerful he is to puniſh it, were it, if it pleaſed him, in one moment to cut off all the Ungodly, high and low, throughout the whole World; yet he bears, and forbears to puniſh. Oh! what a World of ſin every day in Nations, in Cities and Villages; yea, in Families that he doth not ſtrike with preſent Judgements, and not only forbears to puniſh, but multiplies his common mercies on them, Sun, and Rain, and fruitful Seaſons.

Yea, there is ſo much of this that it falls under a groſs miſconſtruction, yet he bears that too, *Becauſe ſentence againſt an evil work is not ſpeedily executed; therefore the hearts of the Sons of Men is fully ſet in them to do evil.* Eccleſ. 8. Becauſe there is not ſo much as a word of it for the time (ſo the word is) this greatens, and fills the heart of Man, and makes it big to do evil. And not only is the Lord's long ſuffering miſtaken by the Ungodly, but even by his own, that ſhould underſtand him better, and know the true ſenſe of his ways: yet ſometimes they

are miſled in this point, beholding his forbearance of puniſhing the workers of iniquity, inſtead of magnifying his patience, they fall very near into queſtioning his Juſtice and Providence, *Pſal.* 13. *Jer.* 12. *Job.* 21. &c. Our narrow haſty ſpirits left to their own meaſures, take not in theſe larger views that would ſatisfie us in the ways of God, and forget the immenſe largeneſs of his wiſe deſigns, his deep reach from one Age to another, yea, from eternity to eternity; conſider not how eaſily he can right himſelf in point of Juſtice, when he will, that none can make eſcape from him, how looſe ſoever their guard ſeem, and how great liberty ſoever appears in their preſent condition. 2. That as he can moſt eaſily, ſo he will moſt ſeaſonably be known in executing Judgement, and that his Juſtice ſhall ſhine the brighter, by all that patience he hath uſed, by the Sun of Proſperity. 3. We think not how little that time is to him, that ſeems long to us, to whom a thouſand years, are as one day; a long time of the Churches diſtreſs, and their Enemies Triumph, in theſe ſeventy years of the Babyloniſh Captivity, and yet in God's Language a moment, a ſmall moment. However in the cloſure the Lord always clears himſelf, he is indeed long ſuffering and patient, but the impenitent abuſers of his patience, pay intereſt for all the time of their forbearance, in the weight of Judgement when it comes upon them. But thus we ſee the Lord deals; thus he dealt with the World in the beginning, *when all fleſh had corrupted their way*; *yet*, ſayeth he, *their days ſhall be one hundred and twenty years.*

Nemo decoquit huic creditori.

Let us learn to curb and cool our brisk humours, towards even ſtubborn ſinners; be grieved at their ſin, its our duty, but think it not ſtrange, nor fret at it, that they continue to abuſe the long ſuffering of God, and

yet

yet that he continues ever abuſed by ſuffering them; zeal is good, but as it ſprings from love if it be right, ſo its requited by love, and carries the impreſſions of that love to God, and ſo a complacency in his way; liking it becauſe it's his, and love to men, ſo as to be pleaſed with that waiting for them in poſſibility at leaſt of their being reclaimed; knowing that however, if they return not, yet the Lord will not loſe his own at their hands. *Wilt thou*, ſaid theſe two fiery Diſciples, *that we call for fire, as Elias!* Oh! but the Spirit of the Dove reſted on him, that told them, *they knew not what Spirit they were of*; you ſpeak of *Elias*, and you think you are of his Spirit in this motion: but you miſtake your ſelves, that comes from another ſpirit than you imagine, inſtead of ſuch ſudden Jnſtice without you, look inward, and ſee whence that is; examine and correct within you.

When you are tempted to take ill that goodneſs and patience of God to ſinners. Conſider, 1. Can this be right, to differ from his mind in any thing; is it not our only Wiſdom, and ever ſafe Rule to think as he thinks, and will as he wills? And, I pray you, does he not hate ſin more than you do? is not his intereſt in puniſhing it deeper than yours? And if you be zealous for his intereſt, as you pretend, then be ſo with him, and in his way, for ſtarting from that, ſure you are wrong. 2. Conſider, did he not wait for thee? what had become of thee, if long ſuffering had not ſubſerv'd his purpoſe, of further mercy of free pardon to thee? and why will thou not always allow that to which thou art ſo much obliged? would'ſt thou have the Bridge cut becauſe thou art ſo over? Sure thou wilt not own ſo groſs a thought. Therefore eſteem thy God ſtill the more thou ſeeſt of his long ſuffering to ſinners, and

learn

learn for him, and with him, to bear and wait.

But this was not a dumb forbearance, ſuch as may ſerve for a ſurprize; but continual teaching, and warning joyned with it, as before. We ſee they wanted not preaching of the choiceſt kind, he the Son of God by his Eternal Spirit, went and preached to them; it was his Truth in *Noah*'s mouth, and with that we have a continued real Sermon, expreſt in this Verſe, *while the Ark was preparing*; that ſpoke God's mind, and every knock (as the uſual Obſervation is) of the Hammers and Tools uſed in Building preach'd to them, threatning aloud deſigned Judgement, and Exhorting to prevent it; and therefore that word is added, that the long ἐξεδέχετο. ſuffering of God waited or expected, expected a believing of his Word, and returning from their wickedneſs, but we ſee no ſuch thing followed; they took their own Courſe ſtill, and therefore the Lord took his; they had polluted the Earth with their wickedneſs, now the Lord would have the cleanſing by Repentance, that being denied, it muſt be another way by flood, and becauſe they and their ſins remained one, they would not part with them: therefore was one work made of both, they and their ſins as inſeparable muſt be cleanſed away together.

Thus impenitency under much long ſuffering makes Judgement full and compleat. I atteſt you, hath not the Lord uſed much forbearance towards us? hath he not patiently ſpared us? and clearly warned us, and waited long for the Fruit of all? hath any thing been wanting? have not Temporal Mercies been multiplied on us? have not the Spiritual Riches of the Goſpel been opened up to us?

And each of you for your ſelves, conſider how its with you after ſo much long ſuffering of God, that none

of

of you can deny, he hath uſed towards you, and ſo many gracious Invitations with that patience, have they gained your hearts? or do you ſtill remain Servants to ſin? ſtill Strangers to him, and formal Worſhipers? I beſeech you think on it, what will be the iſſue of that courſe? Is it a light matter to you to die in your ſins, and to have the wrath of God abiding on you, to have refuſed Chriſt ſo often; and that after you have been ſo often requeſted to receive Salvation, after the Lord hath followed you with intreaties, hath called to you ſo often, *why will ye die?* yet wilfully to periſh, and withal to have all theſe come in and accuſe you, and make your burden heavier; would you willingly die in this eſtate? if not, then think that yet he is waiting, if at length you will return, this one day more of his waiting you have, and of his ſpeaking to you: and ſome that were here with you the laſt day are taken away ſince. Oh! that we were wiſe and would conſider our latter end, tho' there were neither Sword or Peſtilence near you, you muſt die, and for any thing you know, quickly: why wear you out the day of Grace, and thoſe precious Seaſons ſtill; as uncertain of Chriſt, yea, as indiligent after him as you were long ago: as you love your Souls be more ſerious in their buſineſs, this was their undoing; they were all for preſent things, they eat and drank, they married in a continued courſe without ceaſing, and without minding their after-eſtate, they were drowned in theſe things, and that drowned them in a Flood: *Noah* did eat and drink, but his main Work was in that time the preparing of the Ark. The neceſſities of this Life the Children of God are tied to, and forc't to beſtow ſome time and pains on them; but the thing that takes up their Hearts, that which the bent of their Souls *Luk.* 17. 27.

Souls is ſet on, is their intereſt in Jeſus Chriſt ; and all your wiſe deſigns are but a pleaſing madneſs, till this be chief with you. Others have had as much of God's patience, and as fair opportunity as you, whoſe Souls and Chriſt have never met, and now know, that they never ſhall ; they had their time of worldly projects and enjoyment , as you now have, and followed them, as if they had been immortally to abide with them ; but they are paſt away as a Shadow, and we are poſting after them, and within a while ſhall lie down in the duſt. Oh ! how happy they whoſe hearts are not here trading with vanity and gathering vexation, but whoſe thoughts are on that bleſſed life above trouble ; Certainly they that paſs for fools within the World are the only Children of wiſdom, that have renounced their luſts and their own wills, have yielded up themſelves to Jeſus, taken him for their King, and have their minds reſting on him as their Salvation.

While the Ark was a preparing.] *Obſ.* 1. The delay of the Lords determined Judgement on the ungodly, was indeed long-ſuffering towards them, but here was more in it to *Noah*, and his Family, the providing for their preſervation, and till that was compleated for them, the reſt were ſpared. Thus the very forbearance that the ungodly do enjoy, is uſually involv'd with the intereſt of the godly, ſomthing of that readily goes into it, and ſo it is in a great part for their ſakes, that the reſt are both ſpared, and are furniſht with common mercies. The Saints are uſually the ſcorn and contempt of others, yet are by that love the Lords carries towards them, the very Arches, Pillars of States, and Kingdoms, and Families where they are, yea of the World ; the frame whereby its mainly continued in regard to them. *Iſa.* 6. 13. But they that

[*Semen ſanctum ſtatumen terræ*].

that are ungrateful to the great Maker and Upholder of it, and regardleſs of him. What wonder they take no notice of the advantage they receive by the concernment of his Children in the World.

Here. 1. The Work. 2. The End of it. In the Work, preparing of the Ark, obſerve. 1. Gods appointment. 2. *Noahs* obedience.

The power of God was not tied to this, yet his Wiſdom chooſed it, he that ſteered the courſe of this Ark ſafely all that time, could have preſerved thoſe he deſigned it for, without it; But thus it pleaſes the Lord uſually to mix his wonderfulleſt deliverances, with ſome ſelected means, exerciſing that way our obedience in their uſe, yet ſo as the ſingular power of his hand in them, whereon faith reſts, doth clearly appear, doing by them what in a more natural way they could not poſſibly effect.

2. For the obedience of *Noah*, if we ſhould inſiſt on the difficulties both in this work, and in the way of their preſervation by it, it would look the clearer and be found very remarkable; the length of the work, the great pains in providing materials; and conſider we the oppoſition that likely he met with in it from the prophane about him, the mightier of them at leaſt, the hatred and continual ſcoffs of all ſorts, it required principles of an invincible reſolution to go through with it. What (would they ſay) means this old dottard to do, whether this monſtruous Voyage, and for that it ſpoke, as no doubt he told them their ruin and his ſafety, this would incenſe them ſo much the more; you look far before you, and what, ſhall we all periſh and you alone eſcape? But through all the ſoveraign Command, and gracious promiſe of his God carried him; regarding their ſcoffs and threats as little

in making the Ark, as he did afterwards the noiſe of the waters about it, when he was ſitting ſafe within it. This his obedience, having indeed ſo boiſtrous winds to encounter, had need of a well faſtened root, that it might ſtand and hold out againſt them all, and ſo it had. The Apoſtle St. *Paul* tells us that the root of it was, *by Faith being warned, he prepared an Ark*; and there's no living, and laſting obedience, but what ſprings from that root: he believed what the Lord ſpake of his determin'd Judgement on the ungodly World, and from the belief of that aroſe that holy fear, which is expreſly mention'd, as exciting him to this work. And he believed the Word of Promiſe, that the Lord ſpoke concerning his preſervation by the Ark; and the belief of theſe two, carried him ſtrongly on to the work, and through it, againſt all counter blaſts and oppoſition, overcame his own doubtings and the wicked's mockings, ſtill looking to him that was the Maſter, and Contriver of the Work.

Heb. 11.

Till we attain ſuch a fixed view of our God, and firm perſwaſions of his Truth, and Power, and Goodneſs, it will never be right with us, there will be nothing but wavering and unſettledneſs in our Spirits, and in our ways; every little diſcouragement from within or without, that meets us, will be like to turn us over; we ſhall not walk in an even courſe, but ſtill reeling and ſtaggering, till Faith be ſet whole upon its own baſis the proper Foundation of it; not ſet betwixt two, upon one ſtrong prop and another that's rotten, that's the way to fall off; partly on God, and partly on creature helps and encouragements, or our own ſtrength. Our only ſafe and happy way is, in humble obedience in his own ſtrength to follow his appointments, without ſtanding and queſtioning the matter, and

and to reſign the conduct of all to his wiſdom and love, to put the rudder of our life into his hand, to ſteer the courſe of it as ſeems him good, reſting quietly on his Word of Promiſe for our ſafety. Lord whither thou wilt and which way thou wilt, be my guid and it ſufficeth.

This abſolute following of God, and truſting him with all, is markt as the true Character of Faith in *Abraham*, going after God from his Country not knowing, nor not asking, whither he went, ſecure upon his guid: and ſo in that other greater point of offering his Son, ſilenced all diſputes about it, by that mighty concluſion of Faith, accounting that he was able to raiſe him from the dead. Thus here *Noah*, by Faith prepared the Ark, did not argue and queſtion, how ſhall this be done, and if it were, how ſhall I get all the kinds of beaſts gathered together to put into it, and how ſhall it be ended when we are ſhut in? No, but believed firmly that it ſhould be finiſht by him, and he ſaved by it, and he was not diſappointed.

2. The end of this wotk was the ſaving of *Noah*, and his Family from the general Deluge, wherein all the reſt periſhed.

Here it will be fit to conſider the point of the preſervation of the Godly in ordinary and common Caties, briefly in theſe Poſitions.

1. It is certain that the Children of God, as they are not exempted from the common univerſal Calamities, and Evils of this life that befal the reſt of Men, ſo not from any particular kind of them, as it is appointed for them with all others once to dye: ſo we find them not priviledged from any kind of diſeaſe, or other way of death, not from falling by Sword, or by Peſtilence, or in the frenzie of a Feaver, or any kind of ſudden

death: yea, when these or such like are on a Land by way of publick Judgement, the godly are not altogether exempt from them, but may fall in them with others; as we find *Moses* dying in the Wilderness with those he brought out of *Egypt*. Now though it was for a particular failing in the Wilderness, yet it evinces, that there is in this nothing prejudging their priviledges, nor contrary to the love of God towards them, and his Covenant with them.

2. The Promises made to the Godly of preservation from Common Judgments have their truth, and are made good in many of them so preserv'd, though they do hold not absolutely and universally, for they are ever to be understood in subordination to their highest good. But when they are preserved they ought to take it as a gracious accomplishment even of these promises to them, which the wicked, many of which do likewise escape, have no right to, but are preserved for after Judgment.

3. It is certain that the Curse and Sting is out of all those evils, incident to the godly with others in life and death, which makes the main difference though to the eye of the World invisible. And it may be observed that in these Common Judgements of Sword or Pestilence or other epidemick diseases a great part of those that are cut off are most of the wickedest, tho the Lord may send of those Arrows to some few of his own to call them home.

The full and clear distinction of the godly and wicked being reserved for their after Estate in Eternity, it needs not seem strange that in many things it appear not here: one thing above all others most grievous to the Child of God may take away the wonder of other things they suffer in common, that is the remainders

mainders of ſin in them while they are in the fleſh, though there is a Spirit in them above it, and contrary to it, which makes the difference: yet ſometimes the too much likeneſs, eſpecially in the prevailings of corruption, doth confuſe the matter, not only to others eyes but their own.

4. Though the great diſtinction and ſevering be reſerved to that great and ſolemn day, that ſhall clear all; yet the Lord is pleaſed in part more remarkably at ſometimes to difference his own from the ungodly, in the execution of temporal Judgments, and to give theſe as preludes of that final and full Judgment. And this of *Noah* was one of the moſt eminent in that kind, being the moſt general Judgment that ever befel the World: or that ſhall till the laſt, and ſo the livelieſt figure of it, it was by water, as the ſecond ſhall be by fire, it was moſt congruous that it ſhould reſemble in this as the chief point, ſaving of righteous *Noah* and his Family from it, prefiguring the eternal Salvation of Believers, as our Apoſtle teacheth.

Wherein few, that is, eight perſons were ſaved by water.] This great point of the fewneſs of thoſe that are ſaved in the other greater Salvation as in this, I ſhall not now proſecute; only,

1. If ſo few, then the inquiry into our ſelves, whither we be of theſe few, would be more diligent, and followed more home than it is yet with the moſt of us: we are wary in our trifles, and only in this eaſily deceived, yea our own deceivers in this great point. Is not this folly far beyond what you uſually ſay of ſome, penny wiſe and pound fool, to be wiſe for a moment and fools for eternity?

2. You that are indeed ſeeking the way of life, be not diſcouraged by your fewneſs, it hath always been

ſo

ſo, you ſee here how few of the whole World, and is it not better to be of the few in the Ark than of the multitude in the waters? let them fret, as ordinarily they do, to ſee ſo few more diligent for Heaven, as no doubt they did of *Noah*, and this is it that galls them, that any ſhould have higher names and ſurer hopes this way; what? are none but ſuch as you going to Heaven, think you us all damned? what can we ſay, but there is a flood of wrath waſting many ſo, and certainly all that are out of the Ark ſhall periſh in it.

3. This is that main truth that I would leave with you; look on Jeſus Chriſt as the Ark, of whom this was a figure, and believe it, out of him there is nothing but certain deſtruction, a deluge of wrath all the World over out of Chriſt. Oh! it is our life, our only ſafety to be in him: But theſe things are not believed. Men think they believe them, and do not. Were it believed that we are under the Sentence of eternal death in our natural eſtate, and no eſcape but by removing out of our ſelves unto Chriſt, Oh! what thronging would there be to him, whereas, now he invites and calls, and how few are perſwaded to come to him. *Noah* believes the Lord's word of Judgment againſt the World, believed his Promiſe made to him, and prepared an Ark; is it not a high ſign of unbelief that there being an Ark of everlaſting Salvation ready prepared to our hand, we will not ſo much as come to it? Will you be perſwaded certainly that the Ark Door ſtands open; his offers are free, do but come and try if he will turn you away; no, he will not, *him that comes to me I will in no wiſe caſt out.* And as there is ſuch acceptance and ſure preſervation in him, there is as ſure periſhing without him, truſt on what you, will

will, be you of a Giants ſtature as many were of them, to help you to climb up, as they would ſure do when the Flood came on, to the higheſt Mountains and talleſt Trees, yet it ſhall overtake you, make your beſt of your worldly advantages, or good parts, or civil righteouſneſs, all ſhall prove poor ſhifts from the flood of wrath, which riſes above all thoſe, and drowns them; only the Ark of our Salvation is ſafe, think how gladly they would have been within the Ark, when they found Death without it, and now it was too late, how would many that now deſpiſe Chriſt, wiſh to honour him one Day. Men ſo long as they thought to be ſafe on the Earth, would never betake them to the Ark, would think it a Priſon, and could Men find Salvation any where elſe, they would never come to Chriſt for it: this is, becauſe they know not. But yet be it neceſſity let that drive thee in, and then being in him thou ſhalt find reaſon to love him for himſelf, beſides the Salvation thou haſt in him.

2. You that have fled into him for refuge, wrong him not ſo far as to queſtion your ſafety, what though the floods of thy former guiltineſs riſe high, thine Ark ſhall ſtill be above them, and the higher they riſe the higher he ſhall riſe, ſhall have the more glory in free juſtifying and ſaving thee, though thou find the remaining power of ſin ſtill within thee, yet it ſhall not ſink thine Ark; there was in this Ark ſin, yet they were ſaved from the flood; if thou doeſt believe, that puts thee in Chriſt, and he will bring thee ſafe through, without ſplitting or ſinking.

3. As thou art bound to account thy ſelf ſafe in him, ſo to admire that love that ſet thee there. *Noah* was a holy Man; but whence was both his holineſs

holineſs and preſervation while the World periſht; but becauſe he found favour, or free grace, as the word is, in the eyes of the Lord. And no doubt he did much contemplate this, being ſecure within, when the cries of the reſt, drowning, were about him; thus think thou, ſeeing ſo few ſaved in this bleſſed Ark, wherein I am, in compariſon of the multitudes that periſh in the deluge, whence is this, why I choſen and ſo many about me left? why, but becauſe it pleaſed him. But all is ſtreight here, we have no hearts nor no time for ample thoughts of this love, till we be beyond time, then ſhall we admire, and praiſe without ceaſing, and without wearying.

Verſe 21.

21. *The like figure whereunto, even Baptiſm doth alſo now ſave us (not the putting away the filth of the fleſh, but the anſwer of a good Conſcience towards God) by the reſurrection of Jeſus Chriſt.*

AS the Example the Apoſtle here makes uſe of, is great and remarkable, ſo its fit and ſutable for the inſtruction of Chriſtians, this he clears in the particular reſemblance of it with the rule of Chriſtianity; *Baptiſm, the like figure*, &c.

In them. 1. The end of Baptiſm. 2. The proper vertue or efficacy of it for that end. A reſemblance in both theſe to *Noah*'s preſervation in the flood.

Save

Save us.] This is the great common end of all the Ordinances of God, that one high mark they all aim at. And the great and common miſtake of them is, that they are not ſo underſtood and uſed; We come and ſit a while, and if we can keep awake, give the Word the hearing, but how few of us receive it as the ingrafted Word that is able to ſave our Souls; were it thus taken, what ſweetneſs would be found in it, that moſt, as hear and read it, are ſtrangers to. How precious would theſe lines be, if we look on them thus, ſaw them meeting and concentring in Salvation as their end. Thus likewiſe the Sacraments conſidered indeed as Seals of this Inheritance, annexed to the great Charter of it, Seals of Salvation; this would powerfully beget a fit appetite for the Lord's Supper, when we are invited to it, and would beget a due eſteem of Baptiſm, would teach you more frequent and fruitful thoughts of your own, and more pious conſiderations of it when you require it for your Children. A natural eye, looks upon Bread, and Wine, and Water, and the outward difference of their uſe there, that they are ſet apart and differenced, as is evident by external circumſtances, from their common uſe, but the main of the difference, where their excellency lies, it ſees not, as the eye of faith above that eſpies Salvation under them; and Oh! what another thing are they to it, than to a formal uſer of them. We aſpire to know the hidden rich things of God, that are wrapt up in his Ordinances. We ſtick in the ſhell and ſuperfice of them, and ſeek no further, that makes them unbeautiful and unſavoury to us, and that uſe of them turns into an empty cuſtome. Be more earneſt with him that hath appointed them, and made this their end to ſave us, that he would clear up the eye of our Souls, to ſee

them thus under this relation, and ſee how they ſuit to this their end and tend to it, and ſeriouſly ſeek Salvation in them from his own hand, and we ſhall find it.

Save us.] So that this Salvation of *Noah* and his Family from the Deluge and all outward deliverances and Salvations, but dark ſhadows of this, let them not be ſpoke of, theſe reprivalls and prolongings of this preſent life to the deliverance of the Soul from death, the Second death; the ſtretching of a moment to the concernment of Eternity. How would any of you welcome a full and ſure protection from common dangers, if ſuch were to be had, that you ſhould be aſcertained of ſafety from Sword and Peſtilence, that what ever others ſuffered about you, you and your Family ſhould be free; (And they that have eſcaped a near danger of this kind reſting there, as if no more were to be feared, whereas this common favour may be ſhew'd to theſe that are far off from God;) and what though you be not only thus far ſafe, but, I ſay, if you were ſecured for afterwards, which none of you abſolutely are, yet when you are put out of danger of Sword and plague, ſtill death remains, and ſin and wrath may be remaining with it, and ſhall it not be all one to dye under theſe in a time of publick peace and welfare as if it were now. Yea ſomething more unhappy by the increaſe of the heap of ſin, and wrath, guiltineſs augmented by life prolong'd, and more grievous to be pulled away from the World in the middle of peacable enjoyment, and Everlaſting darkneſs to ſucceed to that ſhort Sun-ſhine of thy day of eaſe; happineſs of a ſhort date, and miſery for ever. What availed it wicked *Cham*, to outlive the flood to Inherit a Curſe after it, to be kept undrown'd in the

the waters, to ſee himſelf and his poſterity blaſted with his Fathers Curſe. Think ſeriouſly, what will be the end of all thy temporary ſafety and preſervation if thou ſhare not in this Salvation, and find not thy ſelf ſealed and marked for it, to flatter thy ſelf with a dream of happineſs, and walk in the light of a few ſparkles, that will ſoon dye out, and then lie down in ſorrow, a ſad bed that the moſt have to go to after they have wearied themſelves all the day, all their life, being in a chaſe of Vanity.

The next thing is, the power and vertue of this means, for its end. That it hath a Power, is clear in that it is ſo expreſly ſaid, *it doth ſave us*, which kind of power, is as clear, in the way of it here expreſt, not by a natural force of the Element, though adapted and ſacramentally uſed; it only can waſh away the filth of the Body, its Phyſical Efficacy, or power reaches no further: but it is in the hand of the Spirit of God as other Sacraments, and as the Word it ſelf is, to purifie the Conſcience, and convey Grace, and Salvation to the Soul by the reference it hath to, and union with that which it repreſents. It ſaves *by anſwer of a good Conſcience unto God*, and it affords that, *by the Reſurrection of Jeſus from the dead.*

Thus then we have a true Accompt of the Power of this, and ſo of other Sacraments; and a diſcovery of the error of two extreams. (1.) Of thoſe that aſcribe too much to them, as if they wrought by a Natural inherent Vertue, and carried Grace in them inſeparably. 2. Of thoſe that aſcribe too little to them, making them only ſigns and badges of our Profeſſion, ſigns they are, but more than ſigns, meerly repreſenting, they are means exhibiting, and ſeals confirming Grace to the Faithful. But the working of Faith, and the conveying

of Christ into the Soul to be received by Faith, is not a thing put into them to do of themselves, but still in the Supream hand, that appointed them: and he indeed both causes the Souls of his own to receive these his Seals with faith, and makes them effectually to confirm that Faith, which receives them so. They are then in a word neither empty signs to them that believe, nor effectual Causes of Grace to them that believe not.

The mistake on both sides arises from the inconsideration of the relative Nature of these Seals, and that kind of Union that is betwixt them, and the Grace they represent, which is real, though not Natural or Physical, as they speak. So that, though they do not save all that partake of them, yet they do really and effectually save Believers, for whose Salvation they are means, as the other external Ordinances of God do. Though they have not that Power which is peculiar to the Author of them, yet a Power they have, such as befits their Nature, and by reason of which, they are truely said to Sanctifie, and Justifie, and so to save, as the Apostle here avers of Baptism.

Now that which is intended for our help, our carnal minds are ready to turn into a hinderance and disadvantage. The Lord representing invisible things to the eye, and confirming his Promises even by visible seals: we are apt by the grossness of our unspiritual hearts, instead of steping up by that which is earthly to the Divine Spiritual things represented, to stay on the outward Element, and go no further: therefore the Apostle to lead us into the inside of this Seal of Baptism, is very clear in designing the effect and fruit of it. *Not* (says he) *putting away the filth of the flesh*, and water, if you look no further can do no more. There is an invisible impurity upon our Nature, chiefly on our invisible Part, our Soul;

Soul; this waſhing means the taking away of that, and where it reaches its true effect it doth ſo purifie the Conſcience, and makes it good, truly ſo in the ſight of God who is the Judge of it.

Conſi. 1. It's a pitiful thing to ſee the Ignorance of the moſt profeſſing Chriſtianity, and partaking of the outward Seals of it, and yet knowing not what they mean, know not the ſpiritual dignity and vertue of them; blind in the Myſteries of the Kingdom, and not ſo much as ſenſible of that blindneſs. And being ignorant of the Nature of theſe holy things, cannot have a due eſteem of them, which ariſes out of the view of their inward worth and efficacy. A confuſed fancy of ſome good in them, and this riſing to the other extream to a ſuperſtitious confidence in the ſimple performance, and participance of them, as if that carried ſome inſeparable Vertue with it, which none could miſs of, that are ſprinkled with the Waters of Baptiſm, and ſhare in the Elements of Bread and Wine in the Lord's Supper.

And what is the utmoſt Plea of the moſt for their Title to Heaven, but in theſe relative and external things, they are Chriſtians; are Baptized; hear the Word, and are admitted to the Lord's Table, not conſidering how many through all theſe have gone, and daily are going on in the ways of death, never coming near Jeſus Chriſt, who is the Way, and Truth, and the Life, whom the Word and the Seals of it hold forth to Believers, and they are waſht in his Blood, and quickened with his Life, and made like him, and Co-heirs of Glory with him.

2. Even they that have ſome clearer Notion of the Nature and Fruit of the Seals of Grace, yet are in a practical Error, that they look not with due diligence into themſelves, enquiring after the efficiency of them

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in their hearts; do not ſtudy the Life of Chriſt, to know more what it is, and then to ſearch into themſelves for the Truth, and the growth of that Life within them. Is it not an unbelieving thing for a Chriſtian, (when he is about to appear before the Lord's Table, and ſo looks ſomething more narrowly within) to find as little Faith, as little Divine Affection, a Heart as unmortified to the World, as cold towards Chriſt, as before his laſt Addreſs to the ſame Table, after the intervening poſſibly of many Months; in which time had he been careful often to reflect inwards on his Heart, and look back upon that new ſealing in his laſt Participation, he might likely have been more ſuitable. And truly as there is much guiltineſs cleaves to us in this, ſo readily much more in reference to this other Sacrament that is here the Apoſtles Subject, *Baptiſm*, becauſe but once adminiſtred, and that in Infancy, very ſeldom and ſlightly conſidered by many, even real Chriſtians. And ſo we are at a loſs in that Profit and Comfort, that increaſe of both Holineſs and Faith, that the frequent recollecting of it after a Spiritual manner, would no doubt advance us to. And not only neglect to put our ſelves upon the thoughts of it in private, but in the frequent opportunities of ſuch thoughts in publick; let it paſs unregarded, are idle inconſiderate, and ſo truly guilty beholders, and the more frequent we have them, are the leſs toucht with them; they become common and work not, and the ſlighting of them grows ſo common with us, as the thing. Yea, when the Engagement is more ſpecial and perſonal, when Parents are to preſent their Infants to this Ordinance, and then might, and certainly ought to have a more particular and fixed eye upon it, and themſelves as being ſealed with it, to ask within after the Fruit and Power

Power of it, and to ſtir up themſelves anew to the Actings of Faith, and Ambition after newneſs of Life, and with earneſt prayer for their Children, to be Suiters for themſelves for further evidence of their intereſt in Chriſt: yet poſſibly many are not much in theſe things at ſuch times; but are more buſied to prepare their Houſe for entertaining their Friends, than to prepare their hearts for offering up their Infant unto God to be ſealed, and withal to make a new offer of their own hearts to him, to have renewed on them the inward Seal of the Covenant of Grace, the outward Seal whereof they did receive, as it is now to be conferr'd upon their Infant.

Did we often look upon the Face of our Souls, the ſeeing of the many ſpots we have defil'd them with after our waſhing, it might work us to ſhame and grief, and would drive us by renewed Application to waſh often in that blood which that water figures, which alone can fetch out the ſtain of ſin; and then it would ſet us upon renewed Purpoſes of Purity, to walk more carefully, to avoid the pollutions of the World we walk in, and to purge out the pollutions of the Hearts that we carry about with us, that defile us more than all the World beſides: It would work an holy diſdain of ſin, often to contemplate our ſelves as waſhed in ſo precious a laver; ſhall I, would the Chriſtian ſay, conſidering that I am now cleanſed in the precious blood of my Lord Jeſus, run again into that puddle where he ſo graciouſly took me out and made me clean? Let the Swine wallow in it; he hath made me of his Sheepfold; he hath made me of that excellent order for which all are conſecrated, by that waſhing that partake of it, waſht us in his Blood, and made us Kings and Prieſts unto God the Father. Am I of theſe? and ſhall I debaſe my ſelf

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to the vile pleasures of sin? No, I will think my self too good to serve any sinful lust, seeing he hath lookt on me, and taken me up and washt and dignified me, I am wholly His, all my study and business shall be to honour and magnifie him.

The Answer of a Good Conscience, &c.] The taking away of Spiritual filthiness as the true and saving effect of Baptism, the Apostle here expresses by that which is the further result and effect of it. *The answer of a good Conscience unto God.* For its the washing of that filthiness which makes both the Conscience good, and in making it such, fits it to make answer unto God. A good Conscience in its full Sense, is a pure Conscience, and a peaceable Conscience, and it cannot indeed be peaceably good, unless it be purely good. And although on the other side it may want the present enjoyment of Peace, being purified, yet certainly in a purified Conscience there's Title and Right to Peace, its radically there, even when it appears not. And in due time it shall appear, shall spring forth, bud and flourish.

The purified and good Condition of the whole Soul may well as here it doth, go under the name of the good Conscience, it being so prime a faculty of it, and as the glass of the whole Soul, wherein the estate of it is represented. Therefore *Heb.* 9. the Efficacy of the Blood of Christ is expresst thus, that it *purgeth our Consciences from dead works*, which Expression is the same thing in respect with that here, *the answer of a good Conscience unto God.*

The answer ἐπερώτημα.] The asking or questioning of Conscience, which comprises likeways its Answer, for it intends the whole Correspondence of the Conscience with God, and with it self as towards God, or in the sight of God; and indeed God's questioning it, is by it self,

ſelf, it is his Deputy in the Soul, he makes it poſe it ſelf for him, and before him, concerning its own Condition, and ſo the Anſwer it gives it ſelf in that poſture, as he ſitting and hearing it in his Preſence, is an Anſwer made unto him. This queſtioning and anſwering (if ſuch a thing were at this time, as it was certainly ſoon after) yet means not the Queſtions and Anſwers us'd in the Baptiſm of Perſons, who being of years profeſſed their Faith in anſwering the queſtions moved, it poſſibly alludes unto that, and by way of reſemblance, expreſſes the inward Queſtioning and Anſwering which is tranſacted within, betwixt the Soul and it ſelf, and the Soul and God, and ſo is alluſively called ἐπερώτημα a Queſtioning and Anſwering, but diſtinctively ſpecified, εἰς θεὸν, that whereas the other was towards Men, this is unto God.

1. A good Conſcience is a waking ſpeaking Conſcience, and the Conſcience that queſtions it ſelf moſt, of all ſorts the beſt; ſo that which is dumb or aſleep, is not active and frequent in ſelf inquiries, is not a good Conſcience. The word is judicial, ἐπερώτημα, Interrogation uſed in Law for the trial and executing of Proceſſes; and this the great buſineſs of Conſcience, to ſit, and examine, and judge within, to hold Courts in the Soul, and it is of continual neceſſity, that it be ſo: no vacancy of this Judicature without great damage to the Eſtate of the Soul; yea, not a day ought to paſs without a Seſſion of Conſcience within; for there are daily diſorders ariſe in the Soul, which if they paſs on will grow and gather more, and ſo breed more difficulty in their trial and redreſs. Yet men do readily turn from this work as hard and unpleaſant, and make many a long vacancy in the year, and protract it from one day to another; in the Morning they muſt go

about their buſineſs, and at night they are weary and ſleepy, and all the day long one Affair ſteps in after another, and in caſe of that failing, ſome triffling company or other, and ſo their days paſs on, the Soul overgrows with impurities and diſorders.

You know what confuſions, and diſorders, and evils will abound amongſt a rude people, where there is no kind of Court nor Judicature held, thus is it with that unruly rable, the luſts and paſſions of our Souls, when there is no diſcipline nor Judgement within, or where there is but a neglect and intermiſſion of it for a ſhort time. And the moſt of Souls are in the poſture of ruin, their vile affections, as a head-ſtrong tumultuous multitude, that will not ſuffer a deputed Judge to ſit amongſt them, cry down their Conſciences, and make a continual noiſe that the voice of it may not be heard, and ſo force it to deſiſt and leave them to their own ways.

But you that take this courſe, know, you are providing the ſevereſt Judgement for your ſelves by diſturbing of Judgement, as when a people riſe againſt an inferiour Judge, the Prince or Supreme Magiſtrate that ſent him hearing of it, doth not fail to vindicate his honour and Juſtice in their exemplary puniſhment.

Will you not anſwer unto Conſcience, but when it begins to ſpeak, turn to buſineſs, or Company, that you may not hear it? know, that it and you muſt anſwer unto God, and when he ſhall make enquiry, it muſt report, and report as the truth is, knowing that there is no hiding the matter from him. Lord, there are to my knowledge a World of enormities within the circuit I had to judge, and I would have judged them, but was violented, and interrupted, and was not ſtrong enough to reſiſt the tumultuous pow-

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er that roſe againſt me. Now the matter comes into thine own hand to judge it thy ſelf; What ſhall the Soul ſay in that day, when Conſcience ſhall make ſuch an anſwer unto God, and it ſhall come under the ſeverity of his juſtice for all. Whereas if it had given way to the Conſcience to find out and judge and rectifie matters, it could have anſwered concerning its procedure that way, God would accept this as the anſwer of a Good Conſcience, and what he had done, he would not do over again; it is judged, then I acquit, *for if we would judge our ſelves,* (ſays the Apoſtle) *we ſhould not be judged.*

The queſtioning or inquiry of Conſcience, and ſo its report or anſwer unto God, extends to all the affairs of the Soul, all the affections and motions of it, and all the actions, and carriage of the whole Man. The open wickedneſs of the moſt teſtifies againſt them, that though ſprinkled with water in Baptiſm, yet they are Strangers to the power and Gracious Efficacy of it, not *Baptiſed with the Holy Ghoſt, and with fire:* ſtill their droſs and filth remaining to them; and nothing elſe appearing in their ways, ſo that their Conſciences cannot ſo much as make a good anſwer for them unto Men, much leſs unto God. What ſhall it anſwer for them being judged? but that they are Swearers, and Curſers, and Drunkards, or unclean, or that they are ſlanderers, delighting to paſs their hours in deſcanting on the actions and ways of others, and looking through the miſcoloured-glaſs of their own malice, and pride, that they are neglecters of God, and holy things, lovers of themſelves, and their own pleaſures more than lovers of God, and have ſuch as theſe impudence enough to call themſelves Chriſtians? and to pretend themſelves to be ſuch as are waſhed, in the

blood of Chriſt? yes they do this. But be aſhamed and confounded in your ſelves, you that remain in this condition; yea although thou art blameleſs in Men's Eyes, and poſſibly in thy own Eyes too, yet thou mayſt be filthy ſtill in the ſight of God. There is ſuch a Generation, a Multitude of them that is pure in their own Eyes, and yet are not waſhed from their filthineſs. Moral evil perſons that are moſt ſatisfied with their own eſtate, or ſuch as have further a form of Godlineſs, but their luſts not mortified by the power of it; ſecret pride, and earthlineſs of Mind, and vain-glory, and carnal wiſdom ſtill pleaſingly entertained within; theſe are ſoul Pollutions, filthy and hateful in the ſight of God, ſo that where it is thus, that the heart is peaceably poſſeſt with ſuch gueſts, there the blood and Spirit of Chriſt are not yet come, neither can there be this anſwer of a Good Conſcience unto God.

This anſwer of a Good Conſcience unto God, as likewiſe its queſtioning, to enable it ſelf for that anſwer, is touching two great points that are of chief concern to their Soul, its *Juſtification* and *Sanctification*, for Baptiſm is the Seal of both, and purges the Conſcience in both reſpects, that water as the figure both of the blood and water, the juſtifying blood of Chriſt, and the pure water of the ſanctifying Spirit of Chriſt; takes away the condemning guiltineſs of ſin by the one, and the polluting filthineſs by the other.

Now the Conſcience of a real Believer enquiring within, upon right diſcovery will make this anſwer unto God, Lord, I have found that there is no ſtanding before thee, for the Soul in it ſelf is overwhelmed with a World of guiltineſs, but I find a blood ſprinkled upon it, that hath, I am ſure, vertue enough to purge

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it all away, and to preſent it pure unto thee, and I know that whereſoever thou findeſt that blood ſprinkled, thine anger is quench'd and appeaſed preſently upon the ſight of it; That hand cannot ſmite where that blood is before thine eye. And this the Lord does agree to, and authoriſes the Conſcience, upon this account to return back an anſwer of ſafety and peace to the Soul.

So for the other, Lord, I find a living Work of holineſs on this Soul, though there is yet corruption there, yet it is as a continual grief and vexation, its an implacable hatred, there is no peace betwixt them, but continual enmity, and hoſtility, and if I cannot ſay much of the high degrees of Grace, and faith in Chriſt, and love to him, and heavenlineſs of Mind, yet I may ſay, there is a beginning of thoſe; at leaſt this I moſt confidently affirm, that there are real and earneſt deſires of the Soul in theſe things.

It would know and conform to thy will, and be delivered from it ſelf, and its own will, and though it were to the higheſt diſpleaſure of all the World, it would gladly walk in all well pleaſing unto thee.

And he that ſees the truth of theſe things, knowing it to be thus, owns it as his own work, and engages himſelf to advance it on, and bring it to perfection.

This is a taſte of that intercourſe the purified Conſcience hath with God, as the ſaving fruit of Baptiſm.

And all this it doth, not of it ſelf, but by vertue of the reſurrection of Jeſus Chriſt, which refers both to the utmoſt effect, *Salvation*; and the nearer effect as a means and pledge of that, *the purging of the Conſcience*.

By this, his Death and the effuſion of his Blood in his ſufferings, are not excluded; but are included in it: His Reſurrection being the evidence of all that work

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of Expiation, both compleated and accepted; full Payment made by our Surety, and ſo he ſet free, and his Freedom the Cauſe and the Aſſurance of ours. Therefore the Apoſtle St. *Paul* expreſſes it ſo, *That he died for our ſins, and roſe for our righteouſneſs*, and our Apoſtle ſhews us the worth of our living hope in this ſame reſurrection, Chap. 1. v. 3. *Bleſſed be the God and Father of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, which according to his abundant mercy, hath begotten us again unto a lively hope, by the Reſurrection of Jeſus Chriſt from the dead.*

Now that Baptiſm doth apply and ſeal to the Believer his Intereſt in the death and reſurrection of Chriſt, the Apoſtle St. *Paul* teaches to the full, *Rom.* 8. 3. The dipping into the waters, our dying with him; and the return thence, our riſing with him.

The laſt thing is, the reſemblance of Baptiſm in theſe things, with the ſaving of *Noah* in the Flood, and it holds in that we ſpoke laſt of, for he ſeemed to have rather entred into a Grave as dead than into a ſafeguard of Life, in going into the Ark, yet there being buried, he roſe again, as it were, in his coming forth to begin a new World. The Waters of the Flood drown'd the Ungodly, as a heap of filthineſs waſht them away, they and their ſin together as one, being inſeparable; and upon the ſame Waters, the Ark floating preſerved *Noah*. Thus the Waters of Baptiſm are intended as a deludge to drown Sin, and to ſave the Believer, that by Faith is ſeparated both from the World and from his Sin; ſo it ſinks, and he is ſaved.

And there is further, one thing ſpecified by the Apoſtle, wherein though it be a little hard, yet chiefly intends the paralel. The fewneſs of theſe that are ſav'd by both, for though many are ſprinkled with the Elemental

tal Water of Baptiſm, yet few, ſo as to attain by it the Anſwer of a good Conſcience towards God, and to live by participance of the Reſurrection and Life of Chriſt.

Thou that ſeeſt the World periſhing in a deluge of Wrath, and art now moſt thoughtful for this, how thou ſhalt eſcape it, fly into Chriſt, as thy ſafety, and reſt ſecure there; thou ſhalt find life in his death, and that life further aſcertained to you in his riſing again: ſo full and clear a Title to Life in theſe two, that thou canſt challenge all Adverſaries upon this very Ground as unconquerable, whileſt thou ſtandeſt on it, and ſpeak thy challenge in the Apoſtles ſtile, *It is God that juſtifieth, who ſhall condemn?* But how know you that he juſtifies? *it is Chriſt that died, yea, rather that is riſen, who ſitteth at the right hand of God, who alſo maketh interceſſion for us,* It alludes to that place, *Iſa.* 50. where Chriſt ſpeaks of himſelf, but in the name of all that adhere to him; *he is near that juſtifies me, who is he that will contend with me*: ſo that what Chriſt ſpeaks there, the Apoſtle with good reaſon imparts to each Believer as in him. If no more to be laid to Chriſt's charge, being now acquitted, as is clear by his riſing again, then neither to thine, who art cloathed with him, and one with him.

This the grand Anſwer of a good Conſcience, and in point of juſtifying them before God, no anſwer but this: What have any to ſay to thee, thy debt is paid by him that undertook it, he is free? anſwer all accuſations with this, *Chriſt is riſen.*

And then for the mortifying of ſin, and ſtrengthing of thy Graces, look daily on that death and reſurrection; ſtudy them, ſet thine eye upon them, till thy Heart take in the Impreſſion of them by much Spiritual

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and affectionate looking on them, beholding the Glory of thy Lord Chriſt, then be transformed unto it, 2 *Cor.* 3. It is not only a moral Patern or Copy, but an effectual Cauſe of thy ſanctification, having real influence into thy Soul; dead with him, and again alive with him. Oh Happineſs and Dignity unſpeakable, to have this Life known and cleared to your Souls! If it were, how would it make you live above the World, and all the vain hopes and fears of this wretched Life, and the fears of Death it ſelf, yea, it would make it moſt lovely to them, that is the moſt affrightful Viſage to the World.

It is the Apoſtles Maxime, that *the carnal mind is enmity againſt God*, as it is univerſally true of every carnal mind, ſo of all the motions and thoughts of it, even where it ſeems to agree with God, yet its ſtill contrary, if it acknowledge and conform to his Ordinances, yet even in ſo doing, its in direct oppoſite terms to him, particularly in this, that which he eſteems moſt in them, the carnal mind makes leaſt account of. He chiefly eyes and values the inſide, the Natural Man dwells and reſts in the ſhell and ſuperfice of them. God according to his Spiritual Nature looks moſt on the more Spiritual part of his worſhip and Worſhippers. The carnal mind's in this, juſt like it ſelfe altogether for the ſenſible external part, and cannot look beyond it. Therefore the Apoſtle here having taken occaſion to ſpeak of Baptiſm by terms of Paralel, and reſemblance with the Flood, is expreſs in correcting this miſtake. It is not (ſays he) *in putting away the filth of the fleſh, but the anſwer of a good conſcience.*

Were it poſſible to perſwade you, I would recommend one thing to you, learn to look on the Ordinances of God ſuitably to their Natures, ſpiritually, and

and enquire after the ſpiritual effect and working of them upon your Conſciences. We would willingly have all Religion reduced to outwards; this is our natural choice, and would pay all in this coyn, as cheaper and eaſier by far, and would compound for the Spiritual part, rather to add and give more external performance and ceremony. Hence the natural complacency of Popery, which is all for this ſervice of the fleſh and body-ſervices, and to thoſe preſcribed of God, all deal ſo liberally with him in that kind, as to add more, and frame new Devices and Rites; what you will in this kind, Sprinklings, and Waſhings, and Anointings, and Incenſe; but whither all this? is it not a groſs miſtake of God to think him thus pleaſed, or is it not a direct affront, knowing that he is not pleaſed with theſe, but deſires another thing; to thruſt that upon him that he cares not for, and refuſe him what he calls for, that ſingle humble heart worſhip and walking with him, that purity of Spirit and Conſcience that he only prizes, and no outward-ſervice, but for theſe as they tend to this end and do attain it? Give me, ſays, he nothing if you give not this. Oh! ſaith the carnal Mind, any thing but this thou ſhalt have; as many waſhings and offerings as thou wilt, *thouſands of Rams, and ten thouſand Rivers of Oyl*; yea, rather then fail, *let the Fruit of my Body go for the Sin of my Soul*. Thus we; will the outward uſe of Word and Sacraments do it, then all ſhall be well; baptiſed we are, and ſhall I hear much and communicate often, if I can reach it, ſhall I be exact in point of Family Worſhip, ſhall I pray in ſecret, all this I do, or at leaſt I now promiſe. Ay, but when all that is done, there is yet one thing may be wanting, and if it be ſo, all that amounts to nothing; is thy Conſcience purged and made good by all theſe, or art thou ſeeking and

aiming at this, by the uſe of all means, then certainly thou ſhalt find life in them? But does thy heart ſtill remain uncleanſed from the old ways, not purified from the Pollutions of the World? do thy beloved ſins ſtill lodge with thee, and keep poſſeſſion of thy heart, then art thou ſtill a ſtranger to Chriſt, and an enemy to God, the word and ſeals of Life are dead to thee, and thou ſtill dead in the uſe of them all. Know you not, that many have made ſhipwrack upon the very rock of Salvation; that many which were baptiſed as well as you, and as conſtant attendants on all the Worſhip and Ordinances of God as you, yet remained without Chriſt, and died in their ſins, and are now paſt recovery. Oh! that you would be warned; there are ſtill multitudes running headlong that ſame courſe tending to deſtruction through the midſt of all the means of Salvation; the ſaddeſt way of all to it, through Word and Sacraments, and all heavenly Ordinances to be walking hellwards. Chriſtians, and yet no Chriſtians, baptiſed and yet unbaptiſed; as the Prophet takes in the prophane multitude of God's own People with the Nations, Jer. 9. 26. *Egypt, and Judah, and Edom; all theſe Nations are uncircumciſed*, and the worſt came laſt, *and all the Houſe of Iſrael are uncircumciſed in the Heart.* Thus, thus the moſt of us unbaptiſed in the heart, and as this is the way of perſonal deſtruction, ſo it is that, as the Prophet there declares, that brings upon the Church ſo many publick Judgments; and as the Apoſtle tells, that for the abuſe of the Lord's Table, *many were ſick and many ſlept.* Certainly our abuſe of the holy things of God, and want of their proper Spiritual Fruits, are amongſt the prime ſins of this Land, for which ſo many ſlain have fallen in the Fields by the Sword, and in the Streets by Peſtilence, and more likely

likely yet to fall, if we thus continue to provoke the Lord to his Face; for it is the moſt avowed direct affront to prophane his holy things; and thus we do while we anſwer not their proper end, and are not inwardly ſanctify'd by them, we have no other Word, nor other Sacraments to recommend to you, than theſe that you have uſed ſo long to no purpoſe; only we would call you from the dead forms, to ſeek the living power of them, that you periſh not.

You think the renouncing of Baptiſm a horrible Word, and that we would ſpeak only ſo of witches, yet it is a common guiltineſs that cleaves to all, who renounce not the filthy luſts, and the ſelf will of their own hearts: for Baptiſm carries in it a renouncing of theſe, and ſo the cleaving unto theſe is a renouncing of it: Oh! we all were ſealed for God: in Baptiſm, who lives ſo? few that have the Impreſſion of it on the Conſcience, and the expreſſion of it in the walk and fruit of their life. We do not, as clean waſhed perſons, abhor and fly all pollutions, all fellowſhip with the unfruitful works of darkneſs.

We have been a long time hearers of the Goſpel, whereof Baptiſm is the ſeal, and moſt of us, often at the Lord's Table. What hath all this done upon us; ask within, are your hearts changed? is there a new Creation there? where is that ſpiritual mindedneſs? are your hearts dead to the World and ſin, and alive to God, your Conſciences purged from dead works?

What mean you, is not this the end of all the ordinances, to make all clean, and to renew and make good the Conſcience, to bring the Soul and your Lord into a happy amity and a good correſpondence, that it may not only be in ſpeaking terms, but often ſpeak and converſe with him, may have liberty of anſwer-

ing and demanding, as this Word hath both. That it may ſpeak the language of faith and humble obedience unto God, and he may ſpeak the language of peace to it, and both, the language of the Lord each to other.

That Conſcience alone is good, that is much buſied in this work, in demanding, and anſwering: that ſpeaks much with it ſelf, and with God; this is both the ſign that it is good and the means to make it better. That Soul will (doubtleſs) be very wary in its walk, that takes daily account of it ſelf, and renders up that account unto God; it will not live by gueſs, but readily examin each ſtep before hand, becauſe it is reſolved to examin all after, will conſider well what it ſhould do, becauſe it means to ask over again what it hath done, and not only to anſwer it ſelf, but to make a faithful report of all unto God, to lay all before him, continually upon tryal made, tell him what is in any meaſure well done, as his own work, and bleſs him for that: and tell him too all the ſlips and miſcarriages of the day, as our own, complaining of our ſelves in his preſence, and ſtill intreating free pardon, and more wiſdom to walk more holily and exactly; and gaining even by our failings more humility and more watchfulneſs.

If you would have your Conſciences anſwer well, they muſt enquire and queſtion much, both before hand, whether is this, I purpoſe and go about, agreable to my Lord's will? will it pleaſe him? ask that more, and regard that more, than this that the moſt follow, will it pleaſe or profit my ſelf, fits that my own humour. And not only the bulk and ſubſtance of thy way and actions, but the manner of them, how thy heart is ſet; ſo think it not enough to go to Church

Church, or to pray, but take heed how yea hear, conſider how pure he is, and how piercing his eye whom thou ſerveſt.

Then after again, think it not enough, I was praying, or hearing, or reading, it was a good work, what need I queſtion it further. No, but be ſtill reflecting and asking how it was done, how have I heard, how have I prayed? was my heart humbled by the diſcoveries of ſin, from the Word? was it refreſht with the promiſes of grace, did it lye level under the word to receive the ſtamp of it, was it in prayer ſet and kept in a holy bent towards God? did it breath forth real and earneſt deſires into his ear, or was it remiſs and roving and dead in the ſervice? So in my Society with others, in ſuch and ſuch Company, what was my time, and how did I follow it, did I ſeek to honour my Lord, and to edifie my Brethren by my carriage and ſpeeches, or did the time run out in trifling vain diſcourſe? when alone, what's the carriage and walk of my heart, where it hath moſt liberty to move its own pace, is it delighted in converſe with God? are the thoughts of heavenly things frequent, and ſweet to it, or does it run after the earth and the delights of it, ſpinning out it ſelf in impertinent vain Contrivances?

The neglect of ſuch inquiries is that, which entertains and increaſes the impurity of the Soul, ſo that Men are afraid to look into themſelves, and to look up to God. But Oh! what a fooliſh courſe is this to ſhift off that which cannot be avoided; in the end anſwer muſt be made to that all-ſeeing Judge, with whom we have to do, and to whom we owe our accompts.

And truly it would be ſeriouſly conſidered what makes this good Conſcience, that makes an acceptable anſwer unto God That appears by the oppoſition,

not the puting away the filth of the flesh, then it is the puting away of Soul filthineſs; ſo then its the renewing and purifying of the Conſcience that makes it good, pure and peaceable. In the purifying it may be troubled, which is but the ſtirring in cleanſing of it, which makes more quiet in the end, as Phyſick, or the launcing of a ſore, and after it is in ſome meaſure cleanſed, it may have fits of trouble, which yet ſtill add further purity and further peace: ſo there is no hazard in that work; but all the miſery is, a dead ſecurity of the Conſcience remaining filthy, and yet unſtirred, or after ſome ſtirring or pricking, as a wound, not thoroughly cured, skin'd over, which will but breed more vexation in the end, it will feſter and grow more difficult to be cur'd, and if it be cur'd it muſt be by deeper cutting and more pain, than if at firſt it had endured a thorough ſearch.

O My Brethren! take heed of ſleeping unto death, carnal eaſe; reſolve to take no reſt, till you be in the Element and place of Soul reſt, where ſolid reſt indeed is, reſt not till you be with Chriſt, though all the World ſhould offer their beſt, turn them by with diſdain, if they will not be turned by, throw them down, and go over them and upon them; you have no reſt to give me, nor will I take any at your hands, nor from no creature; no reſt for me till I be under his ſhaddow, who endured ſo much trouble to purchaſe my reſt, and having found him may ſit down quiet and ſatisfied, and when the World makes boaſt of their higheſt contents, I will outvie them all with this own Word, *my beloved is mine, and I am his.*

Towards God.] The Conſcience of Man is never right at peace in it ſelf, till it be rightly perſwaded of peace with God, which while it remains filthy

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it cannot be: for he is holy, and iniquity cannot dwell with him; what Communion betwixt light and darkneſs; ſo then the Conſcience muſt be cleanſed e're it can look upon God with aſſurance and peace. This cleanſing is ſacramentally performed by Baptiſm, effectually by the Spirit of Chriſt, and the blood of Chriſt; and he lives to impart both. Therefore here is mention'd his reſurrection from the dead, as that, by virtue whereof we are aſſured of this purging and peace. Then can it in ſome meaſure with confidence anſwer, Lord, though polluted by former ſins, and by ſin ſtill dwelling in me, yet thou ſeeſt that my deſires are daily more like my Chriſt; I would have more love and zeal for thee, more hatred of ſin, that can anſwer with St. *Peter*, that was poſed, *loveſt thou me?* Lord I appeal to thine own eye, who ſeeſt my heart, *Lord thou knoweſt that I love thee*, at leaſt I deſire to love thee, and to deſire thee and that is love. Willingly would I do thee more ſutable ſervice, and honour thy name more, and do deſire more Grace for this, that thou maiſt have more Glory, and intreat the light of thy Countenance for this end, that by ſeeing it my heart may be more weaned from the World, and knit unto thy ſelf, thus it anſwers touching its inward frame, and the work of holineſs by the Spirit of holineſs dwelling in it: But to anſwer Juſtice touching the point of guilt, it flies to the blood, fetches all its anſwer thence, turns over the matter upon it, and anſwers for it; for it doth ſpeak, and ſpeaks better things than the blood of *Abel*, ſpeaks full payment of all that can be exacted from the ſinner, and that's a ſufficient anſwer.

The Conſcience is then in this point once made ſpeechleſs, driven to a nonplus in it ſelf, hath from it ſelf no anſwer

ſwer to make, then turns about to Chriſt, and finds what to ſay. Lord there is indeed in me nothing but guiltineſs, I have deſerved death, but I have fled into the City of refuge, thou haſt appointed, there I reſolve to abide, to live and die there, if Juſtice purſue me it ſhall ſend me there, I take ſanctuary in Jeſus, my arreſt laid upon me will light upon him, and he hath wherewithal to anſwer it.

He can ſtraightway declare, he hath pay'd all, and can make it good; hath the acquittance to ſhew, yea, his own liberty is a real ſign of it, he was in Priſon, and is let free, which tells all is ſatisfied. Therefore the anſwer here riſes out of the *reſurrection of Jeſus Chriſt.*

And in this very thing lies our peace, and way, and all our happineſs; Oh! its worth your time, and pains to try your intereſt in this, it is the only thing worthy your higheſt diligence. But the moſt are out of their wits, running like a number of diſtracted Perſons and ſtill in a deal of buſineſs, but to what end they know not. You are unwilling to be deceived in thoſe things that at their beſt and ſureſt, do but deceive you when all is done: But content to be deceived in that your great concernment. You are your own deceivers in it; gladly gull'd with ſhadows of faith, and repentance, falſe touches of ſorrow, and and falſe flaſhes of Joy: and are not careful to have your Souls really unbottom'd from themſelves, and built upon Chriſt, to have him your treaſure, your righteouſneſs, your all, and to have him your anſwer unto God your Father: But if you will yet be adviſed, let go all, to lay hold on him; lay your Souls on him and leave him not, he is a tried Foundation Stone, and *he that truſts on him ſhall not be confounded.*

Ver.

Verſe 22.

22. *Who is gone into Heaven, and is on the right hand of God, Angels, and Authorities, and Powers being made ſubject to him.*

THIS is added on purpoſe to ſhew us further what he is, how high and glorious a Saviour we have.

Here four points or ſteps of the Exaltment of Chriſt. 1. Reſurrection from the Dead. 2. Aſcenſion into Heaven. 3. Sitting at the right Hand of God. 4. In that Poſture, his Royal Authority over the Angels. The particulars clear in themſelves. Of the ſitting at the right Hand of God, you are not ignorant that it is a borrowed Expreſſion drawn from Earth to Heaven, to bring down ſome Notion of Heaven to us, to ſignifie to us in our Language, ſuitably to our Cuſtoms, the Supream Dignity of Jeſus Chriſt, God and Man, the Mediator of the New Covenant, his matchleſs nearneſs unto his Father, and the Sovereignty given him over Heaven and Earth. And that of the ſubjection of Angels, is but a more particular ſpecifying of that his Dignity and Power; as enthron'd at the Father's right Hand; they being the moſt elevated and glorious Creatures; ſo his Authority over all the World implyed in that ſubjection of the higheſt and nobleſt part of it: His Victory and Triumph over the Angels of Darkneſs is an evidence of his Invincible Power and Greatneſs, and matter of Comfort to his Saints, but this here is his Supremacy over the glorious Elect Angels.

That there is amongſt them Priority we find, that there is a comely order in their differences cannot be doubted: but to marſhal their Degrees and Stations above, is a point, not only of vain fruitleſs Curioſity, but of preſumptuous intruſion, whether theſe are names of their different particular Dignities, or only different names of their general Excellency and Power, as I think it cannot be certainly well determin'd, ſo it imports us not to determine; only this we know, and are particularly taught from this place, that whatſoever is their common Dignity both in names and differences, they are all ſubject to our glorious Head, Chriſt.

What Confirmation they have in their Eſtate by him (though piouſly aſſerted by Divines) is not ſo infallibly clear from the alledged Scriptures, which may bear another ſenſe: But this is certain, that he is their King, and they acknowledge him ſo, and do inceſſantly admire and adore him; they rejoyce in his glory, and in the glory and happineſs of Mankind through him, they yield him moſt cheerful obedience, and ſerve him readily in the good of his Church, and each particular Believer, as he deputes and imploys them.

Which is the thing here intended, having in it theſe two. (1) His Dignity above them. 2. His Authority over them. (1.) Dignity, that even that Nature, which he ſtoopt below them to take on, he hath carried up and raiſed it above them, the very Earth, the fleſh of Man exalted in his Perſon above all thoſe heavenly Spirits, who are of ſo excellent and pure a Being in their Nature, and from the beginning of the World cloathed with ſo tranſcendent Glory; that a parcel of Clay is made ſo bright, and ſet ſo high to outſhine theſe bright flaming Spirits, theſe Stars of the Morning, that

fleſh

fleſh being united to the Fountain of Light, the bleſſed Deity in the Perſon of the Son.

In coming to fetch and put on this Garment he made himſelf lower than the Angels; but carrying it with him at his return to his eternal Throne, and ſitting down with it there, it is high above them, as the Apoſtle teaches excellently and amply, *Heb.* 1. 2. *To which of them, ſaid he, ſit on my right Hand.*

This they look upon with perpetual Wonder, but not with envy nor repining, no, amongſt all their eyes, no ſuch eye to be found; yea, they rejoyce in the infinite Wiſdom of God in this Deſign, and his infinite Love to poor loſt Mankind; its wonderful indeed to to ſee him filling the room of their fallen Brethren, with new gueſts from Earth; yea, ſuch as are born Heirs of Hell; not only thus ſinful Man raiſed to a participance of Glory with them who are ſpotleſs, ſinleſs Spirits, but their fleſh in their Redeemer dignified with a Glory ſo far beyond them. This is that Myſtery they are intent in looking and prying into, and cannot, nor never ſhall ſee the bottom of it, for it hath none.

2. Jeſus Chriſt is not only exalted above the Angels in abſolute Dignity, but in relative Authority over them, he is made Captain over thoſe Heavenly Bands, they are all under his Command, for all Services wherein it pleaſes him to employ them; and the great Employment he hath, is the attending on his Church, and particular Elect Ones; *are they not all miniſtring Spirits ſent forth*, &c. They are the Servants of Chriſt, and in him, and at his appointment the Servants of every Believer, and are many ways ſerviceable and uſeful for their good, which truely we do not duly conſider. There is no danger of overvaluing them, and inclining to Worſhip them upon this Conſideration, yea, if we take

it right, it will rather take off from that. The Angel judg'd his Argument ſtrong enough to St. *John* againſt that, that he was but his fellow Servant: but this is more, that they are Servants to us, although not therefore inferiour, it being a honorary ſervice, yet certainly inferiour to our Head, and ſo to his myſtical body, taken in that Notion as a part of him.

Obſ. 1. The hight of this our Saviour's Glory will appear the more, if we reflect on the deſcent by which he aſcended to it; Oh! how low did we bring down ſo high a Majeſty into the pit wherein we had fallen by climbing to be higher than he had ſet us; it was high by reaſon we fell ſo low, and yet he againſt whom it was committed came down to help us up again, and to take hold of us, *took us on*; ſo the Word is, *Heb.* 2. he took not hold of the Angels; let them go, hath left them to die for ever: But he took hold of the Seed of *Abraham*, and took on him indeed their fleſh dwelling amongſt us, and in a mean part; emptied himſelf and became of no repute, and further after he deſcended into the Earth, and into our fleſh, in it he became obedient to death upon the Croſs, and deſcended into the Grave. And by theſe ſteps was walking towards that Glory wherein now he is, *Phil.* 1. he abaſed himſelf wherefore ſays the Apoſtle, *God hath highly exalted him*, ſo he himſelf, Luk. 24. *Ought not Chriſt firſt to ſuffer theſe things, and ſo enter into his Glory.* Now this indeed it is pertinent to conſider, and the Apoſtle is here upon point of ſuffering, that's his theam, and therefore he is ſo particular in the aſcending of Chriſt to his Glory; who of thoſe that would come thither will refuſe to follow him in the way where he led ἀρχηγὸς *the leader of our Faith*, Heb. 12. and who of thoſe that follow him, will not love and delight

to

to follow him through any way, the loweſt and darkeſt; its excellent and ſafe, and then it ends you ſee where.

2. Think not ſtrange of the Lord's method with his Church, bringing her to ſo low and deſperate a Poſture many times; can ſhe be in a more ſeeming deſperate condition than was her head, not only in ignominous ſufferings, but dead and laid in the Grave, and the Stone roll'd to it and ſealed, and made all ſure, and yet aroſe and aſcended, and now ſits in Glory, and ſhall ſit till all his Enemies become his Footſtool; do not fear for him, that they ſhall overtop, yea, or be able to reach him, who is exalted higher than the Heavens; be not affraid neither for his Church, which is his Body, and if his Head be ſafe and live, cannot but partake of ſafety and life with him; though ſhe were to ſight dead and laid in the Grave, yet ſhall ſhe riſe thence and be more glorious than before, and ſtill the lower brought in diſtreſs, ſhall riſe the higher in the day of deliverance. *Iſa.* 26. 19.

Thus in his dealing with a Soul, obſerve the Lord's method; think it not ſtrange, that he brings a Soul low, very low, which he means to comfort and exalt very high in Grace and Glory; leads it by Hell-gates to Heaven, that it be at that point, *my God, my God why haſt thou forſaken me*; was not the Head put to uſe that Word, and ſo to ſpeak it, as the Head ſpeaks for the Body, ſeaſoning it for his Members, and ſweetning that bitter cup by his own drinking of it. Oh! what a hard condition may a ſoul be brought unto, and put to think, *can he love me, and intend mercy for me? that leaves me to this*: And yet in all, the Lord preparing it thus for comfort and bleſſedneſs.

3. Turn your thoughts more frequently to this Excellent

cellent Subject, the glorious high Eſtate of our great high Prieſt. The Angels admire this Myſtery, and we ſlight it, they rejoyce in it, and we whom it certainly more nearly concerns, are not moved with it, do not draw that comfort and that inſtruction from it which it would plentifully afford, if it were drawn. It comforts us againſt all troubles and fears, is he not on high who hath undertaken for us? doth any thing befall us but it is paſt firſt in Heaven, and ſhall any thing paſs there to our prejudice or damage, he ſits there and is upon the Counſel of all, who hath loved us, and given himſelf for us: yea, who, as he deſcended thence for us, did likewiſe aſcend thither again for us, hath made our Inheritance, he purchas'd, there ſure to us, taking Poſſeſſion for us, and in our name, ſince he is there, not only as the Son of God, but as our Surety, and as our Head, and ſo the Believer may think himſelf even already poſſeſt of this Right, in as much as his Chriſt is there. The Saints are glorified already in their head, where he reigns. *Where he reigns, there I believe my ſelf to reign*, ſays *Aug.* And conſider in all thy ſtraights and troubles outward and inward, they are not hid from him, he knows them and feels them, a compaſſionate high Prieſt, hath a gracious ſenſe of thy frailties, and griefs, and fears, and tentation; and will not ſuffer thee to be ſurcharg'd, is ſtill preſenting thy Eſtate to the Father, and uſing that intereſt and power he hath in his affection for thy good. And what wouldſt thou more? art thou one whoſe heart deſires to reſt upon him and cleave to him? thou art knit ſo to him, that his reſurrection and glory ſecures thee thine; his life and thine are not two, but one life, as that of the Head and Members, and if he could not be overcome of death, thou canſt not neither. Oh! that

Ubi caput meum regnat ibi me regnare credo.

that ſweet word, *Becauſe I live, you ſhall live alſo.*

Let thy thoughts and carriage be moulded in this contemplation rightly, ever to look on thy exalted head, conſider his glory: ſee not only thy Nature raiſed in him above the Angels: but thy perſon intereſted by Faith in that his Glory; and then think thy ſelf too good to ſerve any baſe luſt, look down on Sin and the World with a holy diſdain, being united to him who is ſo exalted and ſo glorious. And let not thy mind creep here, engage not thy Heart to any thing that Time and this Earth can afford; Oh! why are we ſo little there where there is ſuch a ſpring of delightful and high thoughts for us. *If ye be riſen with Chriſt, ſeek thoſe things which are above where he ſits*: what mean you, are ye ſuch as will let go you intereſt in this once crucified and now glorified Jeſus? if not, why are ye not more like it? why does it not poſſeſs your hearts more? ought it not to be thus? ſhould not our hearts be where our Treaſure, where our bleſſed Head is? Oh! how unreaſonable, how unfriendly is it, how much may we be aſhamed to have room for earneſt thoughts, or deſires, or delights, about any thing beſide him?

Were this, by theſe that have right in it, much wrought upon the heart, would there be found in them any ingagement to the poor things that are paſſing away? would death be a terrible word? yea, would it not be one of the ſweeteſt, moſt rejoycing thoughts to ſolace and eaſe the heart, under all preſſures to look forward to that day of Liberty? This infectious Diſeaſe may keep poſſeſſion all the Winter and grow hot with the year again: do not flatter your ſelves and think its paſt, you have yet remembring ſtrokes to keep it in your eye. But however, ſhall we abide ſtill here? or is there any thing duly weighed, why we ſhould

ſhould deſire it? well if ye would be untied beforehand, and ſo feel it leſs, this is the only way, look up to him, who draws up all hearts that do indeed behold him; then, I ſay, thy heart ſhall be removed beforehand, and the reſt is eaſie and ſweet when that's done all is gained. And conſider how he deſires the compleating of our union? Shall it be his begging and earneſt deſire, and ſhall it not be ours too, *that where he is there we may be alſo*, with patient ſubmiſſion, yet ſtriving by deſires and ſuits, looking out for our releaſe from this Body of Sin and death.

The End of the Third Chapter.

CHAP.

1 Ep. St. *Peter* Chap. IV. Ver. 1.

Foraſmuch then as Chriſt hath ſuffered for us in the fleſh, arm your ſelves likewiſe with the ſame mind: for he that hath ſuffered in the fleſh, hath ceaſed from ſin.

THE main of a Chriſtians duty lies in theſe two, patience in ſuffering, and avoidance of ſin, ἀνέχυ καὶ ἀπέχυ. and they have a natural influence each into the other; altho affliction ſimply doth not, yet affliction ſweetly and humbly carried doth purifie and diſingage the heart from ſin, weans it from the world and the common wayes of it. And again, holy and exact walking keeps the Soul in a ſound healthful temper, and ſo enables it to patient ſuffering, to bear things more eaſily; as a ſtrong body endures fatigue, heat, and cold, and hardſhip with eaſe, a ſmall part whereof would ſurcharge a ſickly conſtitution. The conſcience of Sin, and careleſs unholy courſes, do wonderfully weaken a Soul and diſtemper it: ſo that it is not able to endure much, every little thing diſturbs it. Therefore the Apoſtle hath reaſon, as to inſiſt on theſe two points ſo much in this Epiſtle, ſo to interweave ſo often the one with the other, preſſing jointly throughout, the chearful bearing of all kind of afflictions.

ctions, and the careful forbearing all kind of Sin; and out of the one diſcourſe ſlides into the other: ſo here.

And as the things agree in their nature, ſo in their great Pattern and Principle, Jeſus Chriſt, and the Apoſtle ſtill draws both from thence, that of Patience, *ch.* 3. *ver.* 18. that of Holineſs here, *Foraſmuch then as Chriſt hath ſuffered for us*, &c.

The chief ſtudy of a Chriſtian, and the very thing that makes him to be a Chriſtian, is conformity with Chriſt. *This is the Sum of Religion* (ſaid that wiſe Heathen) *to be like him whom thou worſhippeſt.* But the example being in it ſelf too ſublime, is brought down to our view in Chriſt, the brightneſs of God veil'd, and veil'd in our own fleſh, that we may look on it. The inacceſſible Light of the Deity is ſo attempered in the humanity of Chriſt, that we may read our Leſſon by it in him, and may direct our walk by it, and that truly is our only way; nothing but wandring and periſhing in all other wayes, darkneſs and miſery out of him, but *he that follows me*, ſays he, *ſhall not walk in darkneſs.* And therefore is he ſet before us in the Goſpel in ſo clear und lively colours, that we may make this our whole endeavour to be like him.

[*Summa religionis imitari quem colis.*] Pyth.

Conſider here, 1. The high ingagement to this conformity. 2. The nature of it. 3. The actual improvement of it. The ingagement lies in this, that he ſuffered for us. Of this before, only in reference to this, had he come down, as ſome have mis-imagined it, only to ſet us this perfect way of obedience, and give us an example of it in our own nature: this had been very much, that the Son of God would deſcend to teach wretched man, and the great King to deſcend into man, and dwell in a Tabernacle of Clay, to ſet up a School in it, for ſuch ignorant accurſed creatures, and

did

did in his own perſon act the hardeſt leſſons, both in doing and ſuffering to lead us in both. But the matter goes yet higher than this. Oh! how much higher hath he ſuffered, not ſimply as our rule, but as our Surety, and in our ſtead. *He ſuffered for us in the fleſh.* We the more obliged to make his ſuffering our example, becauſe it was to us more than an example, it was our ranſom.

This makes the conformity reaſonable in a double reſpect 1. It is due that we follow him, who led thus as the Captain of our Salvation, that we follow in ſuffering, and in doing, ſeeing both were ſo for us; its ſtrange how ſome Armies have addicted themſelves to their head, to be at his call night and day, in Summer and Winter, to refuſe no travel or endurance of hardſhip for him, and all only to pleaſure him, and ſerve his inclination and ambition, as *Cæſar*'s trained bands eſpecially the eldeſt of them, a wonder what they endured in countermarches and tracing from one Country to another: But beſides that, our Lord and Leader is ſo great and excellent, and ſo well deſerves following for his own worth; this lays upon us an obligation beyond all conceiving, that he firſt ſuffered for us, that he endured ſuch hatred of Men, and ſuch wrath of God the Father, and went through death, ſo vile a death, to procure our life: what can be too bitter to endure? or too ſweet to forſake to follow him? Were this duly conſidered would we cleave to our luſts, or to our eaſe, would we not through fire and water, yea through death it ſelf, yea were it through many deaths to go after him?

2. Conſider as its due, ſo it is made eaſie by that his ſuffering for us; our burden that preſſed us to hell, taken off, is not all as nothing that is left to ſuffer or

do? our Chains that bound us over to eternal Death being knock'd off, ſhall we not walk? ſhall we not run in his ways? Oh! think what that Burden and Yoke was he hath eaſed us of, how heavy, how unſufferable it was, and then we ſhall think what he ſo truly ſays, that all he lays on, is ſweet, *his yoke eaſie, and his burden light.* Oh! the happy change, reſcued from the vileſt ſlavery, and called to conformity and Fellowſhip with the Son of God.

2. The Nature of this Conformity (to ſhew the nearneſs of it) is expreſt in the very ſame terms as in the pattern, it is not a remote reſemblance, but the ſame thing, even *ſuffering in the fleſh.* But that we may take it right, what ſuffering is here meant, it is plainly this, ceaſing from ſin; ſo ſuffering in the fleſh here, is not the enduring of afflictions, which is a part of a Chriſtians Conformity with his head, Chriſt, *Rom.* 8. But this is a more inward and ſpiritual ſuffering, it is the ſuffering and the dying of our Corruption, the taking away the life of ſin by the death of Chriſt, and that death of his ſinleſs fleſh works in the Believer the death of ſinful fleſh, that is the Corruption of his Nature, which is ſo uſually in Scripture called *fleſh.* Sin makes Man baſe, drowns him in fleſh, and the luſts of it, makes the very Soul become groſs and earthly, turns it as it were to fleſh: ſo the Apoſtle calls the very Mind that is unrenewed, *a carnal mind. Rom.* 8. And what doth the mind of a Natural Man hunt after and run out into, from one day and year to another; is it not on things of this baſe World and the concernment of his fleſh? What would he have, but be accommodated to eat, and drink, and dreſs, and live at eaſe; he minds earthly things, ſavours and reliſhes them and cares for them; examin the moſt of your pains, and time, and

Corporis negotium.

and your ſtrongeſt deſires, and moſt ſerious thoughts, if they go not this way to raiſe your ſelves and yours in your Worldly condition: yea the higheſt projects of the greateſt natural Spirits are but earth ſtill, in reſpect of things truly ſpiritual; all their State Deſigns go not beyond this poor life that periſhes in the fleſh, and is daily periſhing, even while we are buſieſt, upholding it and providing for it: preſent things, and this lodge of clay, this fleſh and its intereſt, take up moſt of our time and pains, the moſt, yea all, till that change be wrought the Apoſtle ſpeaks of, till Chriſt be put on, *Rom.* 13. *put ye on the Lord Jeſus Chriſt*, and then the other will eaſily follow, that follows in the Words, *make no proviſion for the fleſh to fulfil it in the luſts thereof.* Once in Chriſt, and then your neceſſary general care for this natural life will be regulated and moderated by the Spirit. And for all unlawful and enormous deſires of the fleſh, you ſhall be rid of providing for theſe; inſtead of all proviſion for the life of the fleſh in that ſenſe, there is another gueſt and another life for you now to wait on, and furniſh for: in them that are in Chriſt that fleſh is dead, they are freed from its drudgery, *he that hath ſuffered in the fleſh hath reſted from ſin.*

Ceaſed from ſin.] He is at reſt from it, a Godly Death, as they that die in the Lord reſt from their labours; he that hath ſuffered in the fleſh and is dead to it, dies indeed in the Lord; reſts from the baſe turmoil of ſin, it is no longer his Maſter. As our ſin was the cauſe of Chriſt's death; his death is the death of ſin in us, and that not ſimply, as he bear a moral pattern of it, but the real working cauſe of it, hath an effectual influence on the Soul, kills it to ſin; *I am crucified with Chriſt*, ſays S. *Paul:* Faith ſo looks on the death of Chriſt, that

it

it takes the impreſſion of it, ſets it on the heart, kills it unto ſin: Chriſt and the Believer do not only become one in law, ſo as his death ſtands for theirs, but are in nature, ſo as his death for ſin cauſes theirs to it. *Rom.* 6. 3.

This ſuffering in the fleſh being unto death, and ſuch a death [*Crucifying*] hath indeed pain in it, but what then, it muſt be ſo like his, and the believer like him, in willingly enduring it; all the pain of his ſuffering in the fleſh, his love to us digeſted, and went through it, ſo all the pain to our nature in ſevering and pulling us from our beloved ſins, and our dying to them, if his love be planted in our hearts, that will ſweeten it, and make us delight in it, love deſires nothing more than likeneſs, and ſhares willingly in all with the party loved; and above all love, this Divine Love is pureſt and higheſt, and works ſtrongleſt that way, takes pleaſure in that pain, and is a voluntary death: as *Plato* calls love, it is ſtrong as death, makes the ſtrongeſt body fall to the ground, ſo doth the love of Chriſt make the activeſt and livelieſt ſinner dead to his ſin. And as death ſevers a Man from his deareſt and moſt familiar friends, thus doth the love of Chriſt and his death flowing from it, ſever the heart from its moſt beloved ſins.

I beſeech you ſeek to have your hearts ſet againſt ſin, to hate it, to wound it and be dying daily to it. Be not ſatisfy'd, unleſs ye feel an abatement of it, and a life within you; diſdain that baſe ſervice, and being bought at ſo high a rate, think your ſelves too good to be ſlaves to any baſe luſt, you are called to a more excellent and more honourable ſervice. And of this ſuffering in the fleſh we may ſafely ſay what the Apoſtle ſpeaks of the ſufferings with and for Chriſt, that the partakers

kers of theſe ſufferings are co-heirs of glory with Chriſt, *if we ſuffer thus with him, we ſhall alſo be glorified with him; if we die with him, we ſhall live with him for ever.*

3. The actual improvement of this Conformity. *Arm your ſelves with the ſame Mind*, or thoughts of this Mortification. Death taken Naturally in its proper ſenſe, being an intire privation of life, admits not of degrees: but this figurative death, this Mortification of the fleſh in a Chriſtian, is gradual, in ſo far as he is renewed, and is animated, and acted by the Spirit of Chriſt, he is throughly mortified; (for this death, and that new life joyned with it, and here added, *ver.* 2. go together and grow together) but becauſe he is not totally renewed, and there is in him of that corruption ſtill that is here called fleſh, therefore is this great task to be gaining further upon it, and overcoming and mortifying it every Day, and to this tend the frequent Exhortations of this Nature. *Mortifie your members that are on the earth.* So Rom. 6. *Likewiſe reckon your ſelves dead to ſin*, and *let it not reign in your mortal bodies.* Thus here. *Arm your ſelves with the ſame Mind*, or with this very thought. Conſider and apply that ſuffering of Chriſt in the fleſh to the end, that you with him ſuffering in the fleſh, may ceaſe from ſin. Think it ought to be thus, and ſeek that it may be thus with you.

Arm your ſelves.] There is ſtill fighting, and ſin will be moleſting you, though wounded to death, yet will it ſtruggle for life, and ſeek to wound its enemy; will aſſault the graces that are in you. Do not think if it be once ſtruck, and you have a hit near to the heart by the Sword of the Spirit, that therefore it will ſtir no more. No, ſo long as you live in the fleſh in theſe bowels

els there will be remainders of the life of this flesh, your natural corruption. Therefore ye must be Armed against it. Sin will not give you rest so long as there is a drop of blood in its vein, one spark of life in it, and that will be so long as you have life here. This old Man is stout and will fight himself to death; and at the weakest it will rouze up it self and act its dying Spirits, as Men will do sometimes more eagerly, then when they were not so weak, nor so near death.

This the Children of God often find to their grief, that corruptions, which they thought had been cold dead, stir and rise up again, and set upon them. A Passion or Lust, that after some great stroke lay along while as dead, stirred not, and therefore they thought to have heard no more of it, though it shall never recover fully again to be lively as before, yet will revive in such a measure as to molest, and possibly to foyl them yet again. Therefore is it continually necessary that they live in Arms and put them not off to their dying day; till they put off the body and be altogether free of the flesh: you may take the Lord's promise for victory in the end that shall not fail, but do not promise your self ease in the way, for that will not hold: if at sometimes you be at under, give not all for lost, he hath often won the Day that hath been foiled and wounded in the fight, but likwise take not all for won, so as to have no more conflict, when sometimes you have the better, as in particular battels: be not desperate when you loose, nor secure when you gain them; when it is worst with you do not throw away your Arms, nor lay them away when you are at best.

Now the way to be armed is this, *the same mind*, how would my Lord Christ carry himself in this case, and what was his business in all places and Companies? was

was it not to do the will and advance the glory of his Father? If I be injured and reviled, conſider how would he do in this, would he repay one injury with another, one reproach with another reproach? No *being reviled he reviled not again*; Well through his ſtrength this ſhall be my way too. Thus ought it to be with the Chriſtian, framing all his ways, and words, and very thoughts upon that model, the mind of Chriſt, and to ſtudy in all things to walk even as he walked. 1. Studying, it much, as the reaſon and rule of Mortification. 2. Drawing from it, as the real Cauſe and Spring of mortification.

The pious Contemplation of his Death will moſt powerfully kill the love of ſin in the Soul, and kindle an ardent hatred of it. The Believer looking on his Jeſus crucified for him, and wounded for his tranſgreſſions, and taking in deep thoughts of his ſpotleſs Innocency that deſerved no ſuch thing, and of his matchleſs love that yet endured it all for him, then will he think, ſhall I be a friend to that which was his deadly enemy? ſhall ſin be ſweet to me, that was ſo bitter to him, and that for my ſake? ſhall I ever have a favourable thought or lend it a good look, that ſhed my Lord's blood? ſhall I live in that for which he died, and died to kill it in me. Oh! let it not be.

To the end it may not be, let ſuch really apply that Death to work this on the Soul, for this is always to be added, and is the main indeed, by holding and faſtning that Death cloſe to the Soul effectually to kill the effects of ſin in it, to ſtifle and cruſh them dead by preſſing that death on the heart, looking on it, not only as a moſt compleat model, but as having a moſt effectual vertue for this effect, and deſiring him, intreating our Lord himſelf, who communicates himſelf and

the vertue of his death to the Believer, that he would powerfully cause it to flow to us ; and let us feel the vertue of it.

Its then the only thriving and growing life to be much in the lively Contemplation and Application of Jesus Christ, to be continually studying him, and conversing with him, and drawing from him, receiving of his fullness grace for grace. Wouldest thou have much power against sin, and much increase of holiness ? let thine eye be much on Christ, set thine heart on him ; let it dwell in him, and be still with him. When sin is like to prevail in any kind, go to him, tell him of the insurrection of his enemies, and thy inability to resist, and desire him to suppress them, and to help thee against them, that they may gain nothing by their stirring, but some new wound. If thy heart begin to be taken with and move towards sin, lay it before him, the beams of his love shall eat out that fire of these sinful lusts. Wouldest thou have thy Pride, and Passions, and love of the World, and self love kill'd ? go suit for the vertue of his death and that shall do it : seek his Spirit, the Spirit of Meekness, and Humility, and Divine Love. Look on him, and he shall draw thy heart heavenwards, and unite it to himself, and make it like himself. And is not that the thing thou desirest ?

Verſes 2, 3.

Ver. 2. *That he no longer ſhould live the reſt of his time in the fleſh, to the luſts of men: but to the will of God.*

3. *For the time paſt of our life may ſuffice us to have wrought the will of the Gentiles, when we walked in laſciviouſneſs, luſts, exceſs of Wine, revellings, banquetings, and abominable idolatries:.*

THE Chains of ſin are ſo ſtrong, and ſo faſtened on our Nature, that there is in us no power to break them off, till a mightier and ſtronger Spirit than our own, come into us. The Spirit of Chriſt dropt into the Soul, makes it able to break through an hoſt, and leap over a Wall, as *David* ſpeaks of himſelf furniſht with the ſtrength of his God, *Pſal.* 18. Men's reſolutions fall to nothing, and as a Priſoner that offers to eſcape, and does not, is bound faſter, thus uſually it is with Men, in their ſelf purpoſes of forſaking ſin, they leave out Chriſt in the work, and ſo remain in their Captivity, yea it grows upon them, and while we preſs them to free themſelves and ſhew not Chriſt to them, we put them upon an impoſſiblity, but a look to him makes it feiſable and eaſie. Faith in him, and that love to him, which faith begets, breaks through and ſurmounts all; its the powerful love of Chriſt that kills the love of ſin, and kindles the love of holineſs in the Soul: makes it a willing ſharer in his death, and ſo

a happy partaker of his life: for that always follows and muſt of neceſſity as here is added, *He that hath ſuffered in the fleſh, hath ceaſed from ſin*, is crucified and dead to it, but he looſes nothing; yea it is his great gain the loſs of that deadly life of the fleſh for a new ſpiritual life; a life indeed, *living unto God*; that is the end why he ſo dies, that he may thus live, *That he no longer ſhould live*, &c. and yet live far better, *live to the will of God*. He that is one with Chriſt by believing, he is one throughout in Death and Life, as Chriſt roſe, ſo he that is dead to ſin with him through the power of his Death, riſes to that new life with him through the power of his Reſurrection. And thoſe two are our Sanctification, which, whoſoever do partake of Chriſt, and are found in him, do certainly draw from him. Thus are they joyned, *Rom. 6. 11. Likewiſe reckon you your ſelves dead indeed to ſin, but alive to God*, and both *through Chriſt Jeſus our Lord.*

All they that do really come to Jeſus Chriſt, as they come to him as their Saviour to be cloathed with him and made righteous by him; they come likewiſe to him as their Sanctifier, to be made new and holy by him, to die and live with him, to follow the Lamb whereſoever he goes, through the hardeſt ſufferings, and Death it ſelf, and this ſpiritual ſuffering and dying with him is the univerſal way of all his followers; They are all Martyrs thus in the crucifying of ſinful fleſh, and ſo dying for him, and with him; and they may well go cheerfully through, though it bear the unpleaſant name of Death; yet as the other Death is (which makes it ſo little terrible, yea often appears ſo much deſirable to them) ſo is this the way to a far more excellent and happy life, ſo that they may paſs through it gladly both for the company and end of it;

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its with Chriſt they go into his death, as unto life in his life : Though a Believer might be free upon theſe terms he would not, no ſure : could he be content with that eaſie life of ſin, inſtead of the Divine Life of Chriſt ? no, he will do thus and not accept of deliverance, that he may obtain (as the Apoſtle ſpeaks of the Martyrs) a better reſurrection. Think on it again, you to whom your ſins are dear ſtill, and this life ſweet, you are yet far from Chriſt, and his life.

The Apoſtle with intent to preſs this more home, expreſſes more at large, the nature of the oppo te eſtates and lives that he ſpeaks of, ſo ſets before his Chriſtian Brethren. 1. The Dignity of that new life. 2. By a particular reflex upon the former life preſſes the change. The former life he calls a living, *to the luſts of Men*; this new ſpiritual life *to the will of God.*

The luſts of Men.] Such as are common to the corrupt Nature of Man, ſuch as every Man may find in himſelf, and perceive in others. The Apoſtle in the third verſe more particularly for further clearneſs ſpecifies theſe kind of Men that were moſt notorious in theſe luſts, and thoſe kindof luſts that are moſt notorious in Men. Writing to the diſperſed Jews he calls ſinful luſts, *the will of the Gentiles,* as having leaſt controul of contrary light in them; and yet the Jews walked in the ſame, though they had the Law as a light and rule for the avoiding of them, and implies, that theſe luſts were unbeſeeming even their former condition as Jews; but much more unſuitable to them as now Chriſtians. Some of the groſſeſt of theſe Luſts he names, meaning all the reſt, all the ways of ſin, and repreſenting their vileneſs the more lively, not as ſome take it, when they hear of ſuch hainous ſins, that leſſen

leſſen the evil of more civil nature by the Compariſon, as if freedom from theſe were a blameleſs condition, and a change of it needleſs. No, the Holy Ghoſt means it juſt contrary. That we may judge of all ſin and of our ſinful nature, by our eſtimate of theſe ſins, that are moſt diſcernable and abominable, all ſin though not equal in degree, yet is of one nature and originally ſpringing from one root, ariſing from the ſame unholy nature of Man, and contrary to the ſame holy nature and will of God.

So then. 1. Theſe that walk in theſe high ways of impiety and yet will have the name of Chriſtians, they are the ſhame of Chriſtians, and the profeſt enemies of Jeſus Chriſt, and of all others moſt hateful to him, that ſeem to have taken on his name for no other end, but to ſhame and diſgrace it, but he ſhall vindicate himſelf, and the blot ſhall reſt upon theſe impudent perſons that dare hold up their faces in the Church of God as parts of it, and are indeed nothing but the diſhonour of it, ſpots and blots; that dare own to Worſhip God as his people and remain unclean, riotous and prophane perſons. How ſuits thy ſitting here before the Lord, and thy ſitting with vile ungodly Company on the Ale-Bench? How agrees the Word, ſounds it well, there goes a drunken Chriſtian, unclean, baſely covetous, earthly minded Chriſtian, and the naming of theſe is not beſides the text, but the very words of it, for the Apoſtle warrants us to take it under the name of Idolatry, and in that name he reckons it to be mortified by a Chriſtian. *Col.* 3. 5. *Mortifie therefore your members which are upon the earth, fornication, uncleanneſs, inordinate affection, evil concupiſcence, and covetouſneſs, which is Idolatry.*

2. But yet men that are ſome way exempted from the

the blot of theſe foul impieties, may ſtill remain ſlaves to ſin, alive to it, and dead to God, living to the Luſts of Men, and not to the Will of God, pleaſing others and themſelves, diſpleaſing him. And the ſmootheſt, beſt bred, and moſt moralized Natural is in this baſe thraldom. And the more miſerable that he dreams of liberty in the midſt of his chains, thinks himſelf gay by looking on thoſe that wallow in groſs prophaneneſs, takes meaſure of himſelf, by the moſt crooked lives of ungodly men about him, and ſo thinks himſelf very ſtreight; but lays not the ſtreight Rule of the Will of God to his Ways and Heart, which if he did, he would then diſcover much crookedneſs in his ways, and much more in his heart, that now he ſees not, but takes it for ſquare and even.

Therefore I adviſe and deſire you to look more narrowly to your ſelves in this, and ſee whether you be not ſtill living to your own Luſts and Wills inſtead of God, ſeeking in all your ways to advance and pleaſe your ſelves and not him: is not the bent of your hearts ſet that way, do not your whole Deſires and Endeavours run in that Channel, how you and yours may be ſome body, and you may have where withal to ſerve the fleſh, and to be accounted of, and reſpected amongſt men? and if we trace it home, all a man's honouring and pleaſing of others tends to, and ends in pleaſing of himſelf, it reſolves in that, and is it not ſo meant by him, he pleaſes men either that he may gain by them, or be reſpected by them, or ſomething that is ſtill pleaſing to himſelf may be the return of it: So Self is the grand Idol for which all other heart-idolatries are committed. And indeed in the unrenewed Heart there is no ſcant of them. Oh! what multitudes, what heaps, if the Wall were digg'd through, and the light

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of God going before us, and leading us in to ſee them? The Natural Motion and Way of the Natural Heart is no other, but ſtill ſeeking out new inventions, a forge of new Gods, ſtill either forming them to it ſelf, or worſhipping theſe it hath already framed, committing Spiritual Fornication from God with the Creature, and multiplying Lovers every where as it is tempted: As the Lord complains of his People, *upon every Hill, and under every green Tree.*

You will not believe thus much ill of your ſelves, will not be convinc'd of this unpleaſant but neceſſary Truth, and this is a part of our ſelf-pleaſing, that we pleaſe our ſelves in this, that we will not ſee it, not in our callings and ordinary ways, not in our religious Exerciſes, for in theſe we naturally aim at nothing, but our ſelves, either our Reputation, or at beſt our own Safety and Peace, either to ſtop the cry of Conſcience in preſent, or eſcape the Wrath that is to come, but not in a Spiritual regard of the Will of God, and out of pure love to himſelf, for himſelf, yet thus it ſhould be, and that love the divine Fire in all our Sacrifices. The carnal mind is in the dark, and ſees not its vileneſs in living to it ſelf, will not confeſs it to be ſo; but when God comes into the Soul, he lets it ſee it ſelf, and all its idols and idolatries, and forces it to abhor and loath it ſelf for all its abominations; and having diſcovered its filthineſs to it ſelf, then purges and cleanſes it for himſelf from all its filthineſs, and from all its idols according to his promiſe, and comes in and takes poſſeſſion of it for himſelf, enthrones himſelf in the Heart, and its never right nor happy till that be done.

But to the Will of God.] We readily take any little ſlight change for true converſion, but we may ſee here that

that we miſtake it, it doth not barely knock off ſome obvious apparent enormities; but caſts all in a new mould, alters the whole frame of the Heart and Life, kills a Man, and makes him alive again, and this new life contrary to the old: for the change is made with that intent, *that he live no longer to the luſts of men, but to the Will of God.*

He is now indeed a new Creature, new Judgement and Thoughts of things, and ſo accordingly, new Deſires and Affections, and anſwerable to thoſe new Actions, *old things paſt away, and dead, and all things become new.* ὅλος ἢ μὴ ὅλως.

Politick men have obſerv'd it, that in States, if alterations muſt be, it is better to alter many things, than a few. And Phyſicians have the ſame remark for ones habitude and cuſtom for bodily health upon the ſame ground; becauſe things do ſo relate one to another, that except they be adapted and ſuited together in the change, it availes not: yea, it ſometimes proves the worſe in the whole, though a few things in particular ſeem to be bettered. Thus half Reformations in a Chriſtian, turn to his prejudice, its only beſt to be throughout, and to give up with all Idols, and not to live one half to himſelf and the World, and as it were, another half to God; for that is but falſely ſo, in reality it cannot be: but the way is to make an heap of all, to have all ſacrificed together, and to live to no luſt, but altogether, and only to God. Thus it muſt be, there is no Monſter in the new Creation, half a new Creature, *either all, or not at all.* We have to deal with the Maker and the Searcher of the Heart in this turn, and he will have nothing unleſs he have the Heart, and none of that neither, unleſs he have it all; If thou paſs over into his Kingdom, and become his Subject, thou muſt

have him for thy only Soveraign. Loyalty can admit no rivality, and leaſt of all the higheſt, and beſt of all. If Chriſt be thy King, then his Laws and Scepter muſt rule all in thee, thou muſt now acknowledge no forreign power, that will be treaſon.

Omniſque poteſtas impatiens conſortis.

And if he be thy Husband thou muſt renounce all others? wilt thou provoke him to Jealouſie; yea beware how thou giveſt a thought or look of thy affection any other way, for he will ſpy it, and will not endure it. The Title of a Husband is as ſtrict and tender, as the other of a King.

Its only beſt to be thus, thy great advantage, and happineſs to be thus entirely freed from ſo many tyrannous baſe Lord's and now ſubject only to one, and he ſo great and withal ſo gracious and ſweet a King, the Prince of Peace; thou waſt hurried before and rack't with the very multitude of them, thy Luſts ſo many cruel task maſters over thee, they gave thee no reſt, and the work they ſet thee to, was baſe and ſlaviſh; more than the burdens, and pots, and toyling in the Clay of *Egypt*, held to work in the Earth, to pain and to ſoyl and foul thy ſelf with their drudgery.

Now thou haſt but one to ſerve, and that's a great eaſe, and its no ſlavery, but true honour to ſerve ſo excellent a Lord and in ſo high ſervices: for he puts thee upon nothing, but what is neat and what is honourable, thou art as a Veſſel of honour in his Houſe for his beſt employments, now thou art not at pain to pleaſe this perſon and others, to vex thy ſelf to gain Men, to ſtudy their approbation and honours, nor to keep to thine own luſts and obſerve their mind. None but thy God to pleaſe in all, and ſo he be pleaſed, maiſt diſregard who be diſpleaſed; his will is not fickle and changing

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as mens are, and thine own; he hath told thee what he likes and desires, and alters not: so now thou knowest whom thou hast to do withal, and what to do, whom to please, and what will please him, and this cannot but much settle thy mind, and put thee to ease, and thou maist say heartily, as rejoycing in the change of so many for one, and such, for such a one, as the Church says, Isa. 26 13. *O Lord our God, other Lords beside thee have had dominion over me, but now by thee only will I make mention of thy name,* now none but thy self, not so much as the name of them any more, away with them, through thy Grace thou only shalt be my God. It cannot endure any thing be named with thee.

Now that it may be thus, that we may wholly live to the will of God, we must know his will what it is: Persons grosly ignorant of God and of his will, cannot live to him; we cannot have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, for he is light. This takes off a great many amongst us that have not so much as a common Notion of the Will of God; but besides, that Knowledge, which is a part, and (I may say) the first part, of the renewed Image of God, is not a Natural Knowledge of Spiritual Things, meerly attained by human teaching or industry; but its a beam of God's own, issuing from himself, both enlightening and enlivening the whole Soul, gains the affection and stirs to action: and so indeed it acts, and increases by acting: for the more we walk according to that of the Will of God which we know, the more we shall be advanced to know more: that is the real *proving what is his good, and holy, and acceptable will.* Rom. 12. 2. so says Christ, *if any will do the Will of my Father, he shall know of the Doctrine*; our lying off from the lively

uſe of known Truth, keeps us low in the Knowledge of God and Communion with him.

2. So then upon that Knowledge of God's, Will where it is Spiritual and from himſelf, follows the ſuiting of the Heart with it, the affections taking the ſtamp of it, and agreeing with it, receiving the Truth in the love of it, the Heart transformed into it, and now not driven to obedience violently, but ſweetly moving to it, by love within the Heart framed to the love of God, and ſo of his Will.

3. As Divine Knowledge begets this affection, ſo this affection will bring forth action, real obedience. For theſe three are inſeparably linkt and dependant on the product of another in this way, the affection is not blind but flowing from knowledge, nor actual obedience conſtrained, but flowing from affection; and the affection is not idle, ſeeing it brings forth obedience, nor the knowledge dead, ſeeing it begets affection.

Thus the renewed, the living Chriſtian is all for God, a ſacrifice entirely offer'd up to God, and a living ſacrifice lives to God. Takes no more notice of his own carnal will, hath renounc't that to embrace the holy will of God, and therefore, though there is a contrary Law and will in him, yet he does not acknowledge it, but only the Law of Chriſt as now eſtabliſht in him, that Law of Love, by which he is ſweetly and willingly led. Real Obedience conſults not now in his ways with Fleſh and Blood what will pleaſe them, but only enquires what will pleaſe his God, and knowing his mind, thus reſolves to demur no more, nor to ask conſent of any other, that he will do, and its reaſon enough to him, my Lord will's it, therefore in his ſtrength I will do it, for now I live to his will; it is my Life to ſtudy and obey it. Now

Now we know what is the true Character of the redeemed of Chriſt, that they are freed from the ſervice of themſelves and of the World, yea dead to it, and have no Life but for God, as all his.

Let this then be our ſtudy and ambition to attain this, and to grow in it, to be daily further freed from all other ways, and deſires, and more wholly addicted to the will of our God, diſpleaſed when we find any thing elſe ſtir or move within us, but that, that he Spring of our Motion in every work.

1. Becauſe we know his Soveraign Will, and moſt juſtly ſo, is the Glory of his Name, therefore not to reſt till this be ſet up in our view as our end in all, and to count all our plauſible doings as hateful (as indeed they are) that are not aimed at this end, yea endeavouring to have it as much frequent and expreſs before us as we can attain, ſtill our eye on the mark, throwing away, yea undoing our own intereſt, not ſeeking our ſelves in any thing but him in all.

2. As living to his will in the end of all; ſo in all the way to every ſtep of it. For we cannot attain his end but in his way, nor can we intend it without a reſignation of the way to his preſcript, taking all our directions from him, how we ſhall honour him in all. The Soul that lives to him hath enough not only to make any thing warrantable but amiable, to ſeek his will, and not only does it, but delights to do it, that's to live to him, to find it our life; as we ſpeak of a work wherein Men do moſt, and with moſt deligh employ themſelves. In that ſuch a luſt be Crucified, is it thy will Lord? then no more adviſing, no more delay, how dear ſoever that was when I lived to it, it is now as hateful: ſeeing I live to thee, who it thou hateſt. Wilt thou have me forget an injury though a great one,

and

and love the perſon that hath wronged me? While I lived to my ſelf and my paſſions this had been hard. But now how ſweet is it, ſeeing I live to thee, and am glad to be put upon things moſt oppoſite to my corrupt heart, glad to trample upon my own will, to follow thine; and this I daily aſpire to and aim at, to have no will of my own, but that thine be in me, that I may live to thee, as one with thee, and thou my rule and delight. Yea not to uſe the very natural comforts of my Life but for thee, to eat, and drink, and ſleep for thee, and not to pleaſe my ſelf but to be enabled to ſerve and pleaſe thee, to make one offering of my ſelf and all my actions to thee my Lord.

Oh! its the only ſweet life to be living thus, and daily learning to live more fully thus, it is Heaven this, a little ſcantling of it here, and a pledge of whole Heaven; this is indeed the life of Chriſt, not only like his, but one with his; it is his Spirit, his Life derived into the Soul. And therefore both the moſt excellent and certainly moſt permanent, for he dieth no more, and therefore this his Life cannot be extinguiſht, hence is the perſeverance of the Saints: Becauſe being one Life with Chriſt, alive unto God, one for all for ever.

True the former cuſtome of ſin would plead old poſſeſſion with grace, and this the Apoſtle implies here that becauſe formerly we lived to our Luſts, they will urge that, but he teaches us to beat it directly back on them, and turn the edge of it as moſt ſtrong reaſon againſt them, true you had ſo long time of us, the more is our ſorrow and ſhame, and the more reaſon that it be no longer ſo.

The reſt of this time in the fleſh,] That is, in this body, not to be ſpent as the foregoing, *in living to the fleſh* that

that is the corrupt Luſts of it, and the common ways of the World: But as often as he looks back on that to find it as a ſpur in his ſide, to be the more earneſt and more wholly buſied in living much to God, having lived ſo long contrary to him, in living to the fleſh, *the paſt may ſuffice.* there is a *Lyptote* in that, meaning much more than he expreſſes: it's enough, Oh! too much to have lived ſo long ſo miſerable a Life.

Now ſays the Chriſtian, Oh! corrupt Luſts and deluding World! look for no more, I have ſerved you too long, the reſt whatſoever it is, muſt be to my Lord, to live to him by whom I live: and aſhamed and grieved I am, I was ſo long in beginning; ſo much paſt, it may be the moſt of my ſhort race paſt before I took notice of God or looked towards him. Oh! how have I loſt, and worſe than loſt all my by paſt Days? Now had I the advantages and abilities of many Men, and were I to live many Ages, all ſhould be to live to my God, and honour him; and what ſtrength I have, and what time I ſhall have, through his grace, ſhall be wholly his. And when any Chriſtian hath thus reſolved, that his intended Life being ſo imperfect, and the time ſo ſhort, the poorneſs of the offer would break his heart; were there not an Eternity before him, wherein he ſhall live to his God and in him without blemiſh and without end.

Spiritual things once being diſcerned by a ſpiritual light, the whole Soul is carried after them, and the ways of holineſs are never truly ſweet, till they be thoroughly embrac't, and a full renouncement of all that is contrary to them.

All their former ways of wandring from God, are very hateful to a Chriſtian, that is indeed returned, and brought

brought home: And thoſe moſt of all hateful, wherein they have moſt wandered and moſt delighted A ſight of Chriſt gains the Heart, makes it break from all intanglements of its own luſts, and of the prophane World about it. And theſe are the two things the Apoſtle here aims at, exhorting Chriſtians to the ſtudy of newneſs of life, and ſhewing the neceſſity of it. That they cannot be Chriſtians without it; he oppoſes their new eſtate and engagement to the old cuſtoms of their former condition, and to the continuing cuſtom and conceit of the ungodly World, that againſt both they maintain that rank and dignity to which now they are called, and in a holy diſdain of both, walk as the redeemed of the Lord. Their own former cuſtom he ſpeaks to, *v.* 2, 3. and to the cuſtom and opinion of the World, *v.* 4. and both theſe will ſet ſtrong upon a Man, eſpecially while he is yet weak and newly entered into that new eſtate.

1. His old acquaintance, his wonted luſts will not fail to beſtir themſelves to accuſe him in their moſt obliging familiar way, and repreſent their long continued friendſhip; but the Chriſtian following the Principles of his new being, will not entertain any long diſcourſe with them, but cut them ſhort, tell them that the change he hath made, he avows and finds, it ſo happy, that theſe former delights may put off hopes of regaining him. No, though they dreſs themſelves in their beſt array, and put on all their Ornaments, and ſay as that known word of that Courtiſan, *I am the ſame I was*, The Chriſtian will anſwer as he did, *I am not the ſame I was*. And not only thus will he turn off the Plea of former acquaintance that ſin makes, but turn it back upon it, as in his preſent thoughts making much againſt it; the longer I was ſo deluded, the more reaſon

ſon now that I be wiſer, the more time ſo miſpent; the more preſſing neceſſity of redeeming it. Oh! I have too long lived in that vile ſlavery, all was but huſks I fed on; *I was laying out my money for that which was no bread, and my labour for that which ſatisfied not.* Now I am on the purſuit of a good that I am ſure will ſatisfie, will fill the largeſt deſires of my Soul, and ſhall I be ſparing and ſlack, or ſhall any thing call me off from it. Let it not be, I that took ſo much pains early and late to ſerve and ſacrifice to ſo baſe a God; ſhall I not now live more to my new Lord, the living God, and ſacrifice my time and ſtrength, and my whole ſelf to him?

And this is ſtill the regret of the ſenſible Chriſtian, that he cannot attain to that unwearied diligence, and that ſtrong bent of affection in ſeeking communion with God, and living to him, that ſometimes he had for the ſervice of ſin, wonders that it ſhould be thus with him, not to equal, that which it were, ſo reaſonable that he ſhould ſo far exceed.

It is beyond expreſſion, a thing to be lamented, that ſo ſmall a number of Men regard God the Author of their Being, and live not to him in whom they live; returning that being and life they have, and all their enjoyments as is due to him, from whom they all flow; and then how pittiful is it, that the ſmall number that is thus minded, minds it ſo remiſly and coldly; and is ſo far outſtript by the Children of this World, that they follow painted follies and lies with more eagerneſs and induſtry, than the Children of Wiſdom do that certain and ſolid bleſſedneſs that they ſeek after. Strange that men ſhould do ſo much violence one to another, and to themſelves in body and mind for trifles and chaff: and ſo little to be found of

Plus illi ad vanitatem quam nos ad veritatem.

that allowed and commanded violence for a Kingdom, and ſuch a Kingdom that cannot be ſhaken, a word too high for all the Monarchies on this ſide of the Sun.

And ſhould not our diligence and violence in this ſo worthy a deſign be ſo much the greater, the later we begin to it. They tell it of *Caſar*, that when he paſt into *Spain*, meeting there with *Alexander*'s Statue it occaſioned that he wept, conſidering that he was up ſo much more early, having performed ſo many conqueſts in thoſe years, wherein he thought he had done nothing, and was but yet a beginning. Truly it will be a ſad thought to a really renewed mind to look back on the flower of youth and ſtrength as loſt in vanity, if not in groſs prophaneneſs, yet in ſelf-ſerving and ſelf-pleaſing, and in ignorance and neglect of God. And perceiving their ſhort day ſo far ſpent ere they ſet out, will account years precious, and make the more haſt, and deſire with holy *David*, *enlarged hearts to run the way of God's commandments*; will ſtudy to live much in a little time; having lived all the paſt time to no purpoſe, none now to ſpare upon the luſts and ways of the fleſh, and vain ſocieties and viſits; yea, will be reſcuing all they can from their very neceſſary Affairs, for that which is more neceſſary than all other neceſſities, that one thing needful, to learn the Will of our God, and live to it; this is our Buſineſs, our high Calling, the main and excellent of all our Employments.

Not that we are to caſt off our particular Callings, our due diligence in them: for that will prove a ſnare, and involve a Perſon in things more oppoſite to godlineſs. But certainly this living to God requires, 1. A fit meaſuring of thy own ability for affairs, and as far as thou canſt chuſe, fitting thy load to thy ſhoulders

ders, not ſurcharging thy ſelf with it ; overburden of buſineſſes either by the greatneſs or multitude of them, will not fail to entangle thee and depreſs thy mind, and will hold it ſo down that thou ſhalt not find it poſſible to walk upright and look upwards with that freedom and frequency that becomes Heirs of Heaven.

2. The meaſure of thy affairs being adapted, look to thy affection in them, that it be regulated too; thy heart may be engaged in thy little buſineſs as much, if thou watch it not, a Man may drown in a little brook or pool as well as in a great river, if he be down and plunge himſelf into it, and put his head under water. Some care thou muſt have, that thou maiſt not care, theſe things that are thorns indeed, thou muſt make a hedge of them, to keep out thoſe tentations that accompany ſloth, and extream want that waits on it: but let them be the hedge; ſuffer them not to grow within the Garden: though they increaſe ſet not thy heart on them, nor them in thy heart. That place is due to another; is made to be the Garden of thy beloved Lord, made for the beſt plants and flowers: and there they ought to grow; The love of God, and Faith, and Meekneſs, and the other fragrant Graces of the Spirit: and know that this is no common nor eaſie matter to keep the heart diſingaged in the midſt of affairs, that ſtill it be reſerved for him whoſe right it is.

3. Not only labour to keep thy mind Spiritual in it ſelf, but by it, put a ſpiritual ſtamp even upon thy temporal employments: And ſo thou ſhalt live to God not only without prejudice of thy Calling, but even in it, and ſhall converſe with him in thy Shop, or in the Field, or in thy Journey, doing all in obedience to him

and offering all, and thy ſelf withal as a ſacrifice to him: thou ſtill with him, and he ſtill with thee in all. This is to live to the will of God indeed, to follow his direction, and intend his glory in all: thus the wife in the very exerciſe of her houſe, and the husband in his affairs abroad, may be living to God: raiſing their low employments to a high quality this way, Lord, even this mean work I do for thee, complying with thy will who haſt put me in this Station, and given me this task: thy will be done. Lord I offer up even this work to thee, accept of me and of my deſire to obey thee: in all, and as in their work, ſo in their refreſhments, and reſt, all for him, *whether you eat or drink* doing all for this reaſon, becauſe it is his will and for this end, that he may have glory, bending the uſe of all our ſtrength and all his mercies that way, ſetting this mark on all our deſigns and ways, this for the glory of my God, and this further for his glory, ſo from one thing to another throughout our life. This is the art of keeping the heart ſpiritual in all affairs, yea of ſpiritualizing the affairs themſelves in their uſe, that in themſelves are earthly. This the *Elixir* that turns lower mettal into gold, the mean actions of this life in a Chriſtians hands into obedience and holy offering unto God.

And were we acquainted with the way of intermixing holy thoughts, ejaculatory eyings of God, in our ordinary ways, it would keep the heart in a ſweet temper all the day long, and have an excellent influence into all our ordinary actions and holy performances, at thoſe times when we apply our ſelves ſolemnly to them; our hearts would be near them, not ſo far off to ſeek, and call in, as uſually they are through the neglect of this. This were to walk with God indeed

indeed, to go all the day long as in our Fathers hand, whereas without this our praying morning and evening looks but as a formal viſit, not delighting in that conſtant converſe which yet is our happineſs, and honour, and makes all eſtates ſweet. This would refreſh us in the hardeſt Labour, as they that carry the ſpices from *Arabia* are refreſht with the ſmell of them in their Journey, and ſome obſerve, that it keeps their ſtrength and frees them from fainting.

If you would then live to God indeed, be not ſatisfied without the conſtant regard of him, and whoſoever hath attained moſt of it, ſtudy it yet more to ſet the Lord always before you, as *David* profeſſeth and then ſhall you have that comfort that he adds; *he ſhall be ſtill at your right hand that you ſhall not be moved.*

And you that are yet to begin to this, think what his patience is, that after you have ſitten ſo many calls, you may yet begin to ſeek him, and live to him; and then conſider if you ſtill deſpiſe all this goodneſs, how ſoon it may be otherwiſe, you may be paſt the reach of this Call, and may not begin, but be cut off for ever from the hopes of it. Oh, how ſad an Eſtate! and the more, by the remembrance of theſe ſlighted offers and invitations? will you then yet return, you that would ſhare in Chriſt? let go theſe luſts to which you have hitherto lived, and embrace him, and in him there is Spirit and Life for you, he ſhall enable you to live this heavenly life to the will of God, *his God, and your God, and his Father*, and *your Father* Oh! delay no longer this happy change, how ſoon may that puff of breath that is in thy Noſtrils, that heareſt this, be extinguiſht? and art thou willing to dye in thy ſins, rather than that they dye before thee, thinkeſt

thou

thou it a pain to live to the will of God? ſure it will be more pain to lie under his eternal wrath. Oh! thou knoweſt not how ſweet they find it, that have tryed it; or thinkeſt thou I will afterwards? who can make thee ſure either of that afterwards, or of that will, if but afterwards? why not now preſently, without further adviſement, haſt thou not ſerved ſin long enough, may not the time paſt in that ſervice ſerve, is it not too much? wouldeſt thou only live unto God, as little time as may be, and think the dregs of thy life good enough for him? what ingratitude and groſs folly is this; yea though thou wert ſure of coming in to him, and being accepted, yet if thou knoweſt him in any meaſure, thou wouldeſt not think it a priviledge to defer it, but willingly chuſe to be free from the World and thy Luſts to be forthwithal his, and wouldeſt with *David, make haſt and not delay to keep his righteous Judgments*: all the time thou liveſt without him, what a filthy wretched life is it, if life it can be called that is without him: to live to ſin is to live ſtill in a dungeon, but to live to the will of God, is to walk in liberty and light, to walk by light unto light, by the beginnings of it to the fullneſs of it, that is in his preſence.

Verſes 4, 5.

4. *Wherein they think it ſtrange, that you run not with them to the ſame exceſs of riot, ſpeaking evil of you.*

5. *Who ſhall give account to him that is ready, to judge the quick and the dead.*

GRace until it reach home and end in glory, is ſtill in conflict, a reſtleſs party within and without, the whole World againſt it; it is a ſtranger here, and is accounted and uſed ſo, *they think it ſtrange that you run not with them, and they ſpeak evil of you,* theſe wondring thoughts they vent in reproaching words.

In theſe two verſes we have theſe three things (1.) The Chriſtians oppoſite courſe to the World. (2.) Their oppoſite thoughts and ſpeeches of this courſe. (3.) The ſupream and final Judgement of both.

1. The oppoſite courſe in that, *They run to exceſſes of riot.* 2. *You run not with them.*

Ἀσωτίας] *Riot* or *luxury*, though all natural Men, are not in the groſſeſt kind guilty of this, yet they are all of them ſome way truly riotous or luxurious, laviſhing away themſelves, and their days upon the poor periſhing delights of ſin, each according to his own palate and humour; as all perſons that are riotous in the common ſenſe of it, gluttons or drunkards, do not love the ſame kind of meats or drink, but have ſeveral reliſhes and appetites; yet agree in the nature of

of the ſin, ſo the notion enlarged after that ſame manner to the different cuſtome of corrupt nature, takes in all the ways of ſin; ſome glutting in, and continually drunk with pleaſures and carnal enjoyments, others with the cares of this life, which our Saviour reckons with ſurfeiting and drunkenneſs as being a kind of it, and ſurcharging the heart as they do, as there he expreſſes it,

Luk. 21.34. *take heed to your ſelves leſt at any time, your hearts be overcharged with ſurfeiting and drunkenneſs, and cares of this life.* Whatſoever it is that draws away the heart from God, that, how plauſible ſoever, doth debauch and deſtroy us; we ſpend and undo our ſelves upon it as the word [ἀσωτία] ſignifies, making havock of all. And the other word [ἀνάχυσις] profuſion and diſſolute laviſhing, pouring out the affections upon vanity; it is ſcattered and defiled as water ſpilt on the ground that cannot be cleanſed, nor gathered up again, and it paſſes all our skill and ſtrength indeed to recover and recollect our hearts for God; only he can do it for himſelf, he that made it can gather it, and cleanſe it, and make it new, and unite it to himſelf. Oh! what a ſcatter'd broken unſtable thing is the carnal heart, till it be changed; falling in love with every gay folly it meets withal, and running out to reſt profuſely upon things like its vain ſelf, that ſuit and agree with it, and ſerve its Luſts, can dream and muſe upon theſe long enough, any thing that feeds the earthlineſs or pride of it, can be prodigal of hours, and let out floods of thoughts where a little is too much, but bounded and pincht where all are too little; hath not one fixed thought in a whole day to ſpare for God.

And truly this running out of the heart is a continual drunkeneſs and madneſs, is not capable of reaſon, will not be ſtopt in its current by any perſwaſion; it is mad

mad upon its Idols, as the Prophet ſpeaks. You may as well ſpeak to a River in its courſe and bid it ſtay, as ſpeak to an impenitent ſinner in the courſe of his iniquity; and all the other means you can uſe, is but as the putting of your finger to a rapid ſtream to ſtay it; but there is a hand can both ſtop and turn the moſt impetuous torrent of the Heart, be it even of a King, that will leaſt endure any other controulment.

Now as the ungodly World naturally moves to this profuſion, with a ſtrong and ſwift motion runs to it, ſo it runs together to it, and that makes the current both the ſtronger and ſwifter, as a number of Brooks, falling into one main Channel make a mighty ſtream; and every man naturally is in his birth and the courſe of his life, juſt as a Brook, that of it ſelf is carried to that ſtream of ſin that is in the World, and then falling into it, is carried rapidly along with it. And if every ſinner, taken a part, be ſo inconvertible by all created Power, how much more harder a task is a publick Reformation, and turning a Land from its courſe of wickedneſs; all that is ſet to dam up their way, doth at the beſt but ſtay them a little, and they ſwell, and riſe, and run over with a noiſe more violently than if they had not been ſtopt; thus we find outward reſtraints prove, and the very publick Judgements of God on us may have made a little interruption, but upon the abatement of them, the courſe of ſin in all kinds ſeems to be now more fierce, as it were to regain the time loſt in that conſtrain'd forbearance: ſo that we ſee the need of much prayer to intreat his powerful hand, that can turn the courſe of *Jordan*, that he would work not a temporary, but an abiding change of the courſe of this Land, and cauſe many Souls to look upon Jeſus Chriſt, and flow into him; as the word is, *Pſ.* 34. 5.

This is their courſe, *but you run not with them.* The Godly a ſmall and weak company, and yet run counter to the grand Torrent of the World, juſt againſt them: and there is a Spirit within them, whence that their contrary motion flows, and a Spirit ſtrong enough to maintain it in them againſt all the crowd and combined courſe of the ungodly, 1 Joh. 4. 4. *greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the World*, as *Lot* in *Sodom*, his righteous Soul not carried with them, but vexed with their ungodly doings. There is to a Believer the Example of Chriſt to ſet againſt the Example of the World, and the Spirit of Chriſt againſt the Spirit of the World; and theſe are by far the more excellent and ſtronger: faith looking to him and drawing vertue from him, makes the Soul ſurmount all diſcouragments and oppoſitions, ſo Heb. 12. 2. *Looking to Jeſus*, and not only as an example worthy to oppoſe to all the World's examples, the Saints were ſo, *chap.* 11. and *chap.* 12. but he more than they all. But further, *he is the Author and Finiſher of our Faith*, and ſo we eye him as *having endured the croſs, and deſpiſed the ſhame, and is ſet down at the right hand of the Throne of God.* Not only that in doing ſo, we may follow him in that way, unto that end as our pattern, but as head from whom we borrow our ſtrength to follow ſo, *the Author and Finiſher of our Faith.* And ſo 1 Joh. 5. *This is our victory whereby we overcome the World, even our Faith.*

The Spirit of God ſhews the Believer clearly both the baſeneſs of the ways of ſin, and the wretched meaſure of their end. That Divine Light diſcovers the fading and falſe bluſh of the pleaſures of ſin, that there is nothing under them but true deformity and rottenneſs, which the deluded groſs World does not ſee, but takes

takes the firſt appearance of it for true and ſolid beauty, and is ſo enamoured with a painted ſtrumpet. And as he ſees the vileneſs of that love of ſin, he ſees the final unhappineſs of it, that *her ways lead down to the Chambers of Death.* Methinks a Believer is as one ſtanding upon a high Tower, that ſees the way wherein the World runs in a Valley, in an unavoidable Precipice, a ſteep edge hanging over the bottomleſs pit where all that are not reclaimed fall over before they be aware; this they in their low way perceive not, and therefore walk and run on in the ſmooth pleaſures, and eaſe of it towards their perdition: but he that ſees the end will not run with them.

And as he hath by that light of the Spirit this clear reaſon of thinking on and taking another courſe; ſo by that Spirit he hath a very natural bent to a contrary motion, that he cannot be one with them; that Spirit moves him upwards whence it came, and makes that, in ſo far as he is renewed, his natural motion; though he hath a clog of fleſh that cleaves to him, and ſo breeds him ſome difficulty, yet in the ſtrength of that new Nature he overcomes it and goes on, till he attain his end, where all the difficulty in the way preſently is over rewarded and forgotten; that makes amends for every weary ſtep; that every one of theſe that walk in that way, does appear in *Zion* before God.

The Chriſtian and the carnal Men are each moſt wonderful to another. The one wonders to ſee the other walk ſo ſtrictly, and deny himſelf to theſe carnal Liberties that the moſt take, and take for ſo neceſſary, that they think they could not live without them. And the Chriſtian thinks it ſtrange that men ſhould be ſo bewitcht, and ſtill remain Children in the vanity of their turmoil, wearying and humouring themſelves

ſelves from morning to night, running after ſtories and fancies, ever buſie doing nothing, wonders that the delights of earth and ſin can ſo long entertain and pleaſe men, and perſwade them to give Jeſus Chriſt ſo many refuſes, to turn from their life and happineſs; chuſe to be miſerable, yea, take much pains to make themſelves miſerable. He knows the depravedneſs and blindneſs of Nature in this; knows it by himſelf that once he was ſo, and therefore wonders not ſo much at them as they do at him; yet the unreaſonableneſs and frenzy of that courſe now appears to him, he cannot but wonder at theſe woeful miſtakes. But the ungodly wonder far more at him, not knowing the inward cauſe of his different choice and way: the Believer, as we ſaid, is upon the Hill, he is going up, looks back on them in the Valley, and ſees their way tending to and ending in death, and calls to them to retire from it as loud as he can, tells them the danger, but either they hear not, nor underſtand not this Language, or will not believe him; finding preſent eaſe and delight in their way; will not conſider and ſuſpect the end of it; but they judge him the fool that will not ſhare with them, and take that way where ſuch multitudes go, and with ſuch eaſe, and ſome of them with their Train, and Horſes, and Coaches, and all their Pomp: and he and a few ſtraggling poor Creatures like him climbing up a craggy ſteep Hill, and will by no means come off from that way, and partake of theirs, not knowing or not believing that at the top of that Hill he climbs is that happy glorious City, *the new Jeruſalem*, whereof he is a Citizen, and whither he is tending, that he knows their end both of their way and his own, and therefore would reclaim them if he could, but will by no means return unto them, as the Lord commanded the Prophet.

The

The World thinks ſtrange that a Chriſtian can ſpend ſo much time in ſecret Prayer, not knowing nor being able to eſteem the ſweetneſs of communion with God, which he attains that way; yea, while he feels it not, how ſweet it is beyond the World's enjoyments to be but ſeeking after it, and waiting for it. Oh! the delight that is in the bittereſt exerciſe of repentance the very tears, much more the ſucceeding Harveſt of Joy. Its ſtrange unto a carnal Man to ſee the Child of God diſdain the pleaſures of ſin, not knowing the higher and purer delights and pleaſures that he is called to, and hath it may be ſome part in preſent; but however the fullneſs of them in aſſured hope.

Incontinentes vere voluptatis ignari. Chriſt. Eth.

The ſtrangeneſs of the World's way to the Chriſtian, and his to it, though that is ſomewhat unnatural, yet affects them very differently. He looks on the deluded ſinners with pity, they on him with hate. Their part, which is here expreſt, of wondering, breaks out in reviling, *they ſpeak evil of you*; and what's their Voice? what mean theſe preciſe fools, will they readily ſay: what courſe is this they take contrary to all the World? will they make a new Religion, and condemn all their honeſt civil Neighbours that are not like them? Ay forſooth, all go to Hell, think you, except you, and thoſe that follow your guiſe; no more than good-fellowſhip and liberty, and as for ſo much reading and praying, theſe are but brain ſick melancholy conceits, and Man may go to Heaven Neighbour-like without all this ado. Thus they let fly at their pleaſure: But this troubles not the compoſed Chriſtians mind at all; while Curs ſnarl and bark about him, the ſober Traveller goes on his way and regards them not; he that is acquainted with the way of Holineſs, can endure more than the counter-blaſts and airs of ſcoffs and revilings

revilings; he accounts them his Glory and his Riches: So *Moſes* eſteemed the reproach of Chriſt greater riches than the treaſures in *Egypt*. And beſides many other things to animate this that is here expreſt, Oh! how full is it, *They ſhall give account to him that is ready to judge the quick and the dead.* And this in readineſs, τῷ ἑτοίμως ἔχοντι, hath the day ſet, and it ſhall ſurely come, though you think it far off.

Though the wicked themſelves forget them, and the Chriſtian ſlight them, and let them paſs; they paſs not ſo, they are all regiſtred, and the great Court-day ſhall call them to account for all theſe riots and exceſſes, and withal, for all their reproaches of the godly that would not run with them in theſe ways Tremble then you deſpiſers and mockers of Holineſs, though you come not near it. What will you do when theſe you reviled ſhall appear glorious in your ſight, and their King, the King of Saints here much more glorious, and his glory their joy, and all terror to you? Oh! then all faces that could look out diſdainfully upon Religion and the Profeſſors of it, ſhall gather blackneſs and be bathed with ſhame, and the more the deſpiſed Saints of God ſhall ſhout for joy.

You that would rejoyce then in the appearing of that holy Lord and Judge of the World, let your way be now in holineſs; avoid and hate the common ways of the wicked World: they live in their fooliſh opinion, and that ſhall quickly end: But the Sentence of that day ſhall ſtand for ever.

Verſe 6.

6. *For, for this cauſe was the Goſpel preached alſo to them that are dead, that they might be judged according to men in the fleſh, but live according to God in the Spirit.*

IT is a thing of prime concernment for a Chriſtian to be rightly inform'd, and frequently remembred, what is the true eſtate and nature of a Chriſtian, for this the Multitude of thoſe that bear that name, either knows not, or commonly forgets, and ſo is carried away with the vain fancies and miſtakes of the World. The Apoſtle hath charactered Chriſtianity very clearly to us in this place, by that which is the very nature of it, *conformity with Chriſt*, and that which is neceſſarily conſequent upon that, *diſconformity with the World* And as the nature, and natural properties of things hold univerſally, thus it is in thoſe that in all ages are effectually called by the Goſpel, are moulded and framed thus by it; thus it was, ſays the Apoſtle, with your Brethren, that are now at reſt, as many as received the Goſpel, and for this end was it preacht to them, *that they might be judg'd according to men in the fleſh, but live according to God in the Spirit.*

We have firſt here, the preaching of the Goſpel, or ſuitable means to a certain end. 2. The expreſs Nature of that end.

1. *For this Cauſe*] There is a particular end, and that very important, which the preaching of the Goſpel

is

is aimed at; this end many consider not, hearing it, as if it were to no end, not propounding a fixed determined end in our hearing. This therefore is to be considered by those that preach this Gospel, that they aim right in it at this end and no other, no self end: The legal Priests not to be squint eyed, nor evangelical Ministers thus squinting to base gain, vain applause; and also that they make it their study to find in themselves this work, *this living to God*; otherwise they cannot skillfully nor faithfully apply their gifts to this effect on their hearers, and therefore acquaintance with God most necessary.

How sounds it to many of us at the least, but as a well couched story, whose use is to amuse us, and possibly delight us a little, and there is an end, and indeed no end, and turns the most serious and most glorious of all Messages unto an empty sound; and if we awake and give it hearing it is much, but for any thing further, how few deepiy before hand consider, I have a dead heart, therefore will I go unto the word of Life, that it may be quickened; it is frozen, I will go and lay it before the warm Beams of that Sun that shines in the Gospel; my corruptions mighty and strong, and grace (if any) exceeding weak, there is in the Gospel a power to weaken and to kill sin, and to strengthen grace, and this being the intent of my wise God in appointing it, it shall be my desire and purpose in resorting to it, to find it to me according to his gracious intendment, to have faith in my Christ, the Fountian of my Life, more enabled, and more active in drawing from him; to have my heart more refined and spiritualized, and to have the Sluse of Repentance opened, and my Affections to Divine things enlarged, more hatred of sin, and more love of God, and communion with him. Also

Ask your ſelves concerning former times, and to take your ſelves even now, enquire within, why came I hither this day? what had I in mine eye and deſires this morning ere I came forth, and in my way as I was coming? did I ſeriouſly propound an end or no, and what was my end? Nor doth the meer cuſtome of mentioning this in prayer ſatisfie the queſtion; for this, as other ſuch things uſually do in our hand, may turn to a lifeleſs form and have no heat of ſpiritual affection; none of *David*'s panting and breathing after God in his ordinances: ſuch deſires as will not be ſtill'd without a meaſure of attainment, as the Childs deſire of the breaſt; as our Apoſtle reſembles it, *chap.* 2.

And then again, being returned home, reflect on your hearts, much hath been heard, but is there any thing done by it, have I gained my point? it was not to paſs a little time ſimply that I went, or to paſs it with delight in hearing, rejoycing in that light as they did in S. *John Baptiſts*, for a ſeaſon [πρὸς ὥραν] as long as the hour laſts, it was not to have my ear pleaſed, but my heart changed, not to learn ſome new notions, and carry them cold in my head, but to be quickened and purified and renewed in the Spirit of my mind? is this done? think I now more eſteemingly of Chriſt, and the life of faith, and the happineſs of a Chriſtian? and are ſuch thoughts ſolid and abiding with me? what ſin have I left behind? what Grace of the Spirit have I brought home? or what new degree or at leaſt new deſire of it, a living deſire that will follow its point? Oh! this were good repetition.

A ſtrange folly of multitudes of us to ſet our ſelves no mark, to propound no end in the hearing of the Goſpel. The Merchant ſails not only that he may ſail, but for traffick, and trafficks that he may be rich. The Husband Man plows not only to keep himſelf bu-

ſie with no further end, but plows that he may ſow, and ſows that he may reap with advantage, and ſhall we do the moſt excellent and fruitful work fruitleſly, hear only to hear, and look no further. This is indeed a a great vanity, and a great miſery, to loſe that labour, and gain nothing by it, which duly uſed would be of all others moſt advantageous and gainful, and yet all meetings are full of this.

Now when you come, this is not ſimply to hear a diſcourſe and reliſh or diſlike it in hearing: But a matter of life and death, of eternal death and eternal life, and the ſpiritual life, begot and nouriſht by the word, is the beginning of that eternal life. Follows,

To them that are dead.] By which, I conceive, he intends ſuch as had heard and believed the Goſpel, when it came to them, and now were dead. And this, I think, he doth to ſtrengthen theſe brethren to whom he writes, to commend the Goſpel to this intent, and not to think the condition and end of it hard. As our Saviour mollifies the matter of outward ſufferings thus, *ſo perſecuted they the Prophets that were before you.* And the Apoſtle afterwards in this Chapter uſes the ſame reaſon in that ſame ſubject: ſo here, that they might not judge the point of mortification he preſſes, ſo grievous as naturally Men will do, he tells them it is the conſtant end of the Goſpel, and they that have been ſaved by it, went that ſame way he points out to them. They that are dead before you, died this way that I preſs on you, before they died, and the Goſpel was preached to them for that very end.

Men paſs away and others ſucceed, but the Goſpel is ſtill the ſame, hath the ſame tenour, and ſubſtance, and the ſame ends. As *Solomon* ſpeaks of the Heaven's, and Earth, that remain the ſame while one Generation paſſes

paſſes and another cometh; the Goſpel ſurpaſſes both in its ſtability, as our Saviour teſtifies, *they ſhall paſs away but not one Jot of this Word.* And indeed they wear and wax old, as the Apoſtle teaches us; but the Goſpel is from one Age to another of moſt unalterable integrity, hath ſtill the ſame vigour and powerful influence, as at the firſt.

They that formerly received the Goſpel, it was upon theſe terms; therefore think them not hard: and they are now dead, all the difficulty of that work of dying to ſin is now over with them; if they had not died to their ſins by the Goſpel, they had died in them, after a while, and ſo died eternally; it is therefore a wiſe prevention, to have ſin judged and put to death in us before we die, if we die in them and with them, we and our ſin periſh together, if we will not part, but if it die firſt before us then we live for ever.

And what think you, of thy carnal will and all the delights of ſin? What is the longeſt term of its life? uncertain it is, but moſt certainly very ſhort: thou and theſe pleaſures muſt be ſevered and parted within a little time, however thou muſt dye and then they dye, and you never meet again. Now were it not the wiſeſt courſe to part a little ſooner with them, and let them dye before thee, that thou mayeſt inherit eternal life and eternal delights in it, pleaſures for evermore. Its the only bargain and let us delay it no longer.

This is our ſeaſon of enjoying the ſweetneſs of the Goſpel, others heard it before us in our rooms that now we fill, and now they are removed, and remove we muſt ſhortly, and leave this ſame room to others, to ſpeak and hear in. It is high time we were conſidering what we do here, to what end we ſpeak and hear, and to lay hold on that Salvation that is held forth unto us;

and that we lay hold on it, let go our hold of ſin, and thoſe periſhing things that we hold ſo firm and cleave ſo faſt to, do they that are dead who heard and obeyed the Goſpel now repent their repentance, and mortifying the fleſh, or do they not think ten thouſand times more pains, were it for many Ages, all to little for a moment of that which now they enjoy and ſhall enjoy to eternity. And they that are dead who heard the Goſpel and ſlighted it, if ſuch a thing might be, what would they give for one of theſe opportunities that now we daily have, and daily loſe, and have no fruit nor eſteem of them. You have lately ſeen many of you, and you that ſhifted the ſight, have heard of numbers cut off in a little time, whole families ſwept away by the late ſtroke of God's hand; many of which did think no other but that they might have ſtill been with you here in this place, and exerciſe at this time and many years after this; and yet who hath laid to heart the lengthning out of their day, and conſidered it more as an opportunity of that higher and happier life, than as a little protracting of this wretched life which is haſtening to an end. Oh! *therefore be intreated to day, while it is day, not to harden your hearts*: though the Peſtilence doth not now affright you ſo, yet that ſtanding mortality, and the decay of theſe earthen lodges, tells us that ſhortly we ſhall ceaſe to preach and hear this Goſpel. Did we conſider, it would excite us to more earneſt ſearch after our evidences of that eternal life that is ſet before us in the Goſpel, and we would ſeek it in the characters of that ſpiritual life, which is the beginning of it within us, and is wrought by the Goſpel in all the heirs of Salvation.

Think therefore wiſely of theſe things. (1.) What's the proper end of the Goſpel. (2.) Of the approaching end

of

of thy days, and let thy certainty of this drive thee to ſeek more certainty of the other, that thou maiſt partake of it, and then this again will make the thoughts of the other ſweet to thee; that viſage of death, that is ſo terrible to unchanged ſinners, ſhall be amiable to thine eye, having found a Life in the Goſpel as happy and laſting as this is miſerable and vaniſhing, and ſeeing the perfection of that life on the other ſide of death, will long for the paſſage.

Be more ſerious in this matter of daily hearing the Goſpel, why it is ſent to thee, and what it brings, and think, it is too long I have ſlighted its Meſſage, and many that have done ſo, are cut off, and ſhall hear it no more, I have it once more inviting me, and it may be this may be the laſt to me, and in theſe thoughts ere you come, bow your knee to the Father of Spirits, that this one thing may be granted you, that your Souls may find at length the lively and mighty power of his Spirit upon yours, in the hearing of this Goſpel, that *you may be judged according to men in the fleſh, but live according to God in the Spirit.*

Thus is the particular nature of that end expreſt, and without the noiſe of various ſenſes, intends, I conceive, no other, but the dying to the World and ſin, and living unto God, which is the Apoſtle's main ſubject, and ſcope in the foregoing Diſcourſe, that death was before called a ſuffering in the fleſh, which is in effect the ſame: and therefore though the words may be drawn another way, yet its ſtrange that Interpreters have been ſo far wide of this their genuine and agreeable ſenſe, and almoſt all of them taken in ſome other intendment.

To be judged in the fleſh] In the preſent ſenſe is to die to ſin, or that ſin die in us, and its thus expreſt. 1. Suitably

tably to the nature of it, it is to the flesh, a violent death, and it is according to a Sentence judicially put against it, that guilty and miserable life of sin is in the Gospel adjudged to death, there that arrest and sentence is clear and full, *Rom.* 6. 6, &c. 8. 13. That sin must die, that the Soul may live, it must be crucified in us, and we to it, that we may partake of the Life of Christ and Happiness in him. And this is called to be judged in the flesh, to have this sentence executed. 2. The thing is the rather spoke here under the term of being judged, in counter-ballance of that Judgment mentioned immediately before, *v.* 5. The last Judgment, of quick and dead, wherein they that would not be thus judged, but mockt and despised those that were, shall fall under a far more terrible Judgment, and the sentence of a heavy death, indeed everlasting death: though they think they shall escape and enjoy liberty in living in sin. And that, *to be judged according to men*; is, I conceive, added, to signifie the connaturalness of the life of sin to man's now corrupt nature. That men do judge it a death indeed to be severed and pulled from their sins, and that a cruel death; and the Sentence of it in the Gospel a heavy Sentence, a hard Saying to a carnal Heart, that he must give up with all his sinful delights, must die indeed in self-denial, must be separated from himself, which is to die, if he will be joyned with Christ, and live in him. Thus men judge that they are judged to a painful death by the Sentence of the Gospel, although it is, that they may truely and happily live, yet they understand it not so. They see the death, the parting with sin, and all its pleasures: but the life they see not, nor can any know it till partaking of it; it is known to him in whom it is, *it is hid with Christ in God*: And therefore the opposition here

is

is very fitly thus repreſented, that the death is *according to men in the fleſh*; but the life is *according to God in the Spirit.*

As the Chriſtian is adjudged to this death in the fleſh by the Goſpel, ſo he is lookt on and accounted by carnal men as dead: for that he enjoyes not with them what they eſteem their life, and think they could not live without it, one that cannot carrouſe and ſwear with prophane Men, is a ſilly dead Creature, good for nothing; and he that can bear wrongs, and love him that injured him, is a poor ſpiritleſs fool, hath no mettal nor life in him in the World's account, thus is he *judged according to men in the fleſh*, he is as a dead man, *but lives according to God in the Spirit*, dead to men and alive to God, as *ver.* 2.

Now if this life be in thee, it will act: all life is in motion, and is called an act; but moſt of all active is this moſt excellent, and, as I may call it, moſt lively life, it will be moving towards God; often ſeeking to him, making ſtill towards him as its principle and fountain, holy and affectionate thoughts of him: ſometimes on one of his ſweet attributes, ſometimes on another, as the *Bee* amongſt the Flowers. And as it will thus act within, ſo outwardly laying hold on all occaſions: yea, ſeeking out ways and opportunities to be ſerviceable to thy Lord, employing all for him, commending and extolling his goodneſs, doing and ſuffering chearfully for him, laying out the ſtrength of deſires, and parts, and means in thy ſtation to gain him Glory. If thou be alone, then not alone, but with him; ſeeking to know more of him, and be made more like him; if in company, then caſting about how to bring his name in eſteem, and to draw others to a love of Religion and Holineſs by Speeches as it may be fit,

fit, and moſt by the true behaviour of thy carriage. Tender over the Souls of others to do them good to thy utmoſt, thinking each day an hour loſt when thou art not buſie for the honour and advantage of him to whom thou now liveſt: thinking in the Morning, now what may I do this day for my God? How may I moſt pleaſe and glorifie him, and uſe my ſtrength and wit, and my whole ſelf as not mine but his? and then in the evening, reflecting, O Lord, have I ſeconded theſe thoughts in reality? what glory hath he had by me this day? whither went my thoughts and endeavours? what buſied them moſt? have I been much with God? have I adorned the Goſpel in my converſe with others? And if finding any thing done this way, to bleſs and acknowledge him the ſpring and worker of it. If any ſtep aſide, were it but to an appearance of evil, or if any fit ſeaſon of good hath eſcapt thee unprofitably, to check thy ſelf, and to be grieved for thy ſloth and coldneſs, and ſee if more love would not beget more diligence.

Try it by ſympathy and antipathy, which follows the nature of things, as we ſee in ſome Plants and Creatures that cannot grow, cannot agree together, and others that do favour and beneſit mutually. If thy Soul hath an averſion and reluctancy againſt holineſs, this is an evidence of this new Nature and Life. Thy heart riſes againſt wicked ways and ſpeeches, oaths and curſings, and rotten communication; yea, thou canſt not endure unworthy diſcourſes wherein moſt ſpend their time, findeſt no reliſh in the unſavory ſocieties of ſuch as know not God, canſt not ſit with vain perſons; but findeſt a delight in thoſe that have the image of God upon them, ſuch as partake of that Divine Life, and carry the evidences of it in their carriage.

riage. *David* did not diſdain the fellowſhip of the Saints, and that was no diſparagement to him, he implies in the name he gives them, *Pſal.* 16. *The excellent ones*, the Magnifick or Noble; and that word is taken from one that ſignifies a robe or noble Garment, ſo he thought them Nobles and Kings as well as he, and had robes royal, and therefore Companions of Kings. A ſpiritual eye looks on ſpiritual dignity, and eſteems and loves them that are born of God, how low ſoever be their natural birth and breeding. The Sons of God have of his Spirit in them, and are born to the ſame inheritance where all ſhall have enough; and they are tending homewards by the conduct of the ſame Spirit that is in them, ſo that there muſt be amongſt them a real complacency and delight in one another.

And then conſider the temper of thy heart towards ſpiritual things, the Word and ordinances of God, if thou doſt eſteem highly of them and delight in them; that there is a compliance of thy heart with Divine Truths; ſomthing in thee that ſuits and ſides with them againſt thy corruptions. That in thy affliction thou ſeekeſt not to the puddles of earthly comforts, but haſt thy recourſe to the ſweee Chriſtal Streams of the Divine Promiſes, and findeſt refreſhment in them. It may be at ſometimes in a ſpiritual diſtemper, holy exerciſes and ordinances will not have that preſent ſenſible ſweetneſs to a Chriſtian, that he deſires, and ſome will for a long time lie under dryneſs and deadneſs this way, yet there is here an evidence of this ſpiritual life, that thou ſtayeſt by thy Lord and relieſt on him; and will not leave theſe holy means how ſapleſs ſoever to thy ſenſe for the preſent: thou findeſt for a long time little ſweetneſs in prayer, yet thou prayeſt ſtill; and when thou canſt ſay nothing yet offereſt to it, and lookeſt towards Chriſt thy life; thou doeſt not turn away from theſe

things to ſeek conſolation elſe where, knoweſt life is in Chriſt, and will ſtay till he refreſh thee with new and lively influence, its not any where but in him. As St. *Peter* ſaid, *Lord whether ſhould we go, thou haſt the words of eternal life.*

Conſider thy ſelf, if thou haſt any knowledge of the growth or deficiences of this ſpiritual life, for it is here but begun and breaths in an air contrary to it, and lodges in an houſe that often ſmoaks and darkens it. Canſt thou go on in formal performances from one year to another, and no advancement in the inwards of Grace, and reſteſt content with that? it is no good ſign. But art thou either gaining victories over ſin, and further ſtrength of faith, and love, and other graces, or at leaſt art earneſt ſeeking theſe, and bewailing thy wants, and diſappointments of this kind, then thou liveſt. At the worſt wouldeſt thou rather grow this way, be further off from ſin and nearer God, than grow in thy eſtate or credit or honours? eſteemeſt thou more of grace than of the whole World? There is life at the root; although thou findeſt not that flouriſhing thou deſireſt, yet the deſire of it is life in thee: and if growing this way, art thou content, whatſoever is thy outward eſtate? Canſt thou ſolace thy ſelf in the love and goodneſs of thy God, though the World frowns on thee? art thou not able to take comfort in the ſmiles of the World when his face is hid? this tells thee thou liveſt, and he is thy life.

Although many Chriſtians have not ſo much ſenſible joy, yet they account ſpiritual joy and the light of God's countenance the only true joy, and all other without it madneſs, and they cry, and ſigh, and attend for it; mean while not only duty, and hopes of better, but even love to God, makes them to be ſo, to ſerve and

pleaſe

pleaſe and glorifie him to their utmoſt. And this is not a dead reſting without God, but it is a ſtable compliance with his will in the higheſt point, waiting for him and living by faith, which is moſt acceptable to him; in a word, whether in ſenſible comfort or without it, ſtill this is the fixed thought of a believing Soul, its good for me to draw nigh to God, only good; and will not live in a willing eſtrangedneſs from him, what way ſoever he is pleaſed to deal with t

Now for the entertaining and ſtrengthning this life, which is the great buſineſs, and care of all that have it, beware of omitting and interrupting theſe ſpiritual means, that do provide it and nouriſh it. Little neglects of that kind will draw one greater, and great neglects will make great abatements of vigour and livelineſs. Take heed of uſing holy things coldly, and lazily without affection; that will make them fruitleſs and our life will not be advantaged by them, unleſs uſed in a lively way. Be active in all good within thy reach, as this is a ſign, ſo its a helper and friend to it. A ſlothful unſtirring life will make a ſickly unhealthful life. Motion purifies and ſharpens the Spirits, and makes Men robuſt and vigorous.

2. Beware of admitting a correſpondence with any ſin, yea do not ſo much as diſcourſe familiarly with it, or look kindly toward it, for that will undoubtedly caſt a damp upon thy Spirit, and diminiſh thy Graces at leaſt, and will obſtruct thy Communion with God; thou knoweſt (that haſt any knowledge of this life) that thou canſt not go to him with that ſweet freedom thou wert wont, after thou haſt been but tampering or parlying with any of thy old loves. Oh! do not make ſo fooliſh a bargain as to prejudge the leaſt of

thy ſpiritual comfort, for the greateſt and longeſt continued enjoyments of ſin, that are baſe, and but for a ſeaſon.

But wouldeſt thou grow upwards in this life? have much recourſe to Jeſus Chriſt thy head, the ſpring from whom flow the animal Spirits, that quicken thy Soul. Wouldeſt thou know more of God? he it is that reveals the Father, and reveals him as his Father, and in him thy Father, and that's the ſweet notion of God. Wouldeſt thou overcome thy luſts further? our victory is in him, apply his conqueſt, *We are more than Conquerors, through him that loved us*? wouldeſt thou be more repleniſht with graces, and ſpiritual affections? his fulneſs is for that uſe open to us, life and more life in him, and for us, this was his buſineſs here, he came *that we might have life, and might have it more abundantly.*

Verſe 7.

7. *But the end of all things is at hand, be ye therefore ſober, and watch unto prayer.*

THE heart of a real Chriſtian, is really taken off from the World and ſet heavenwards: yet there is ſtill in this fleſh, ſo much of the fleſh hanging to it, as will readily poiſe all downwards, unleſs it be often wound up, and remembred of theſe things, that will raiſe it ſtill to further ſpiritualneſs. This the Apoſtle doth in this Epiſtle, and particularly in theſe words.

In

In them three things to be conſidered. 1. A three-fold duty recomended. 2. Their mutual Relation, that binds them to one another. 3. The reaſon here uſed to bind them upon a Chriſtian.

And of the three the laſt is evidently the chief, and here ſo meant, the other being recommended as ſuiting it, and ſubſerving to it, *prayer*: Therefore I ſhall ſpeak firſt of it.

And truly, to ſpeak, and to hear of it often, were our hearts truly and entirely acquainted with it, would have ſtill new ſweetneſs and uſefulneſs in it. Oh! how great were the advantage of that lively Knowledge of it, beyond the exacteſt defining of it, and a diſcourſing Knowledge, and of the heads of Doctrine that concern it.

Prayer is not a ſmooth expreſſion, or a well-contrived form of words, not the product of a ready memory, nor rich invention, acting it ſelf in the performance; theſe may draw a neat picture of it, but ſtill the life is wanting. The motion of the Heart Godwards, holy and divine affection, makes prayer real, and lively, and acceptable to the Living God, to whom it is preſented; the pouring out of thy heart to him that made it, and therefore hears it, and underſtands what it ſpeaks, and how its moved and affected in calling on him. It is not the guilded Paper, and good writing of a Petition that prevailes with a Man: but the moving Senſe of it, and to the King that diſcerns the heart, heart ſenſe is the ſenſe of all, and that which he alone regards, liſtens what that ſpeaks, and takes all as nothing where that is ſilent, all other excellence in prayer, is but the outſide and faſhion of it, that is the life of it.

Though Prayer preciſely taken, is only petition; yet in its fuller and uſual ſenſe, it compriſes the vent

of

of our humble ſenſe of vileneſs and ſin, in the ſincere confeſſion, and the extolling withal, and praiſing the holy name of our God; his excellency and goodneſs, and thankful acknowledgment of received mercies. Of theſe ſweet ingredient perfumes is the incenſe of prayer compoſed, and by the divine fire of love aſcends unto God; the Heart, and all with it: and when the Hearts of the Saints unite in joynt prayer, the Pillar of ſweet ſmoke goes up the greater and fuller. Thus ſays that Song of the Spouſe, *going up from the Wilderneſs, as Pillars of ſmoak perfumed with Myrrh and Frankincenſe, and all the Powders of the Merchant*: and as the word there ſignifies, ſtreight Pillars like the talleſt ſtreighteſt kind of trees. Indeed the ſincerity and unfeignedneſs of prayer makes it go up as a ſtreight Pillar, no crookedneſs in it, tending ſtreight towards Heaven, and bowing to no ſide by the way. Oh! the ſingle and fixed viewing of God, as in other ways it is the thing makes all holy and ſweet, ſo particularly in this Divine Work of Prayer.

It is true we have to deal with a God, who of himſelf needs not this our pains either to inform, or excite him; he fully knows our thoughts before we expreſs them, and our wants before we feel them, or think of them. Nor doth his affection and gracious bent to do his Children good, wax remiſs, or admit the leaſt abate and forgetfulneſs of them.

But inſtead of neceſſity on God's part which cannot be imagined, we ſhall find that Equity, and that ſingular Dignity, and Utility of it on our part which cannot be denied.

1. *Equity*, that thus the Creature ſignifie his homage to, and dependance on his Creator, for his being, and well-being; takes all the good he enjoys, or expects from that love-

Sovereign Good, declaring himſelf unworthy, waiting for all upon the terms of free goodneſs, and acknowledging all from that Spring.

2. *Dignity*, Man was made for communion with God his Maker, 'tis the Excellency of his Nature to be capable of this end, the happineſs of it to be raiſed to enjoy it. Now in nothing more in this Life, is this communion actually and highly enjoyed, than in the exerciſe of prayer; that he may freely impart his affairs, and eſtate, and wants to God as the faithfulleſt and powerfulleſt Friend, the richeſt and lovingeſt Father, may uſe the liberty of a Child, telling his Father what he ſtands in need of, and deſires; and communing, with him with humble confidence, admitted to ſo frequent preſence with ſo great a King.

3. The *Utility* of it. 1. Eaſing the Soul in times of ſtrait, when it is preſt with griefs and fears, giving the vent, and that in ſo advantageous a way, emptying them into the boſom of God. The very vent, were it but into the Air, gives eaſe; or ſpeak it to a Statue rather than ſmother it, much more eaſe, poured forth into the lap of a Confident, and ſympathiſing Friend, though unable to help; yet much more of one that can, and of all Friends our God the ſureſt, and moſt affectionate, and moſt powerful, ſo, *Iſa.* 63. 9. both compaſſion and effectual ſalvation expreſt; *In all their affliction he was afflicted, and the Angel of his preſence ſaved them in his love, and in his pity he redeemed them, and he bare them, and carried them all the days of old.* And ſo reſting on his Love, Power, and gracious Promiſes. quiets it ſelf in God upon this aſſurance, that its not vain to ſeek him, and that he deſpiſeth not the ſighing of the poor.

2. The Soul is more ſpiritually affected with its own con-

condition by opening it up before the Lord, more deeply ſenſible of ſin; and aſhamed in his ſight in confeſſing it before him; more dilated and enlarged to receive the mercies ſuited for; as the opening wide of the mouth of the ſoul that it may be filled; more diſpoſed to obſerve the Lord in anſwering, and to bleſs him and truſt on him upon the renewed experiences of his regard to their diſtreſſes and deſires.

3. All the Graces of the Spirit in Prayer are ſtirr'd and acted, and by acting, ſtrengthned and increaſed. Faith in applying the Divine Promiſes, which are the very Ground that the Soul goes upon to God, and Hope looking out to their performance, and Love particularly expreſſing it ſelf, in that ſweet converſe and delighting in it, as love doth in the company of the Perſon loved, thinks all hours too ſhort in ſpeaking with him: Oh how the Soul is refreſht with freedom of Speech with its beloved Lord; and as it delights in that, ſo it is continually advanced and grows by each meeting and conference, beholding the excellency of God, and reliſhing the pure and ſublime pleaſures that is in near communion with him: looking upon the Father in the face of Chriſt, and uſing him as a mediator in prayer, as ſtill it muſt, is drawn to further admiration of that bottomleſs love, that found that way of agreement, that *new and living way* of our acceſs, when all was ſhut up, and we to have been ſhut out for ever. And then the affectionate expreſſions of that reflex love to find that vent in prayer, do kindle higher, as it were fann'd and blown up, riſe to a greater, and higher, and purer flame, and ſo tend upwards the more ſtrongly. *David* as he doth profeſs his love to God in Prayer in his *Pſalms*, ſo no doubt it grew in the expreſſing. *I will love thee, O Lord, my ſtrength, Pſal* 18. and *Pſal.* 116. doth raiſe an incentive

tive of love out of this very conſideration of the correſpondence of prayers; *I love the Lord, becauſe he hath heard*, and reſolves thereafter upon perſiſtence in that courſe; *therefore will I call upon him, as long as I live.* And as the Graces of the Spirit are advanced in prayer, by their actings; ſo for this reaſon further, becauſe prayer ſets the ſoul particularly near unto God in Jeſus Chriſt, 'tis then in his preſence; and being much with God in this way, it is powerfully aſſimilated to him by converſe with him; as we readily contract their Habitudes with whom we reſort much, eſpecially of ſuch as we ſingularly love and reſpect; thus the Soul is moulded further to the likeneſs of God, is ſtampt with fuller Characters of him, by being much with him; becomes liker God, more holy and ſpiritual, and brings back a bright ſhining from the Mount, as *Moſes*.

4*thly*. And not only thus by a natural influence doth prayer work this advantage, but even by a federal efficacy; ſuiting, and upon ſuit obtaining ſupplies of Grace, as the chief good, and beſides all other needful mercies, it is a real means of receiving, *whatſoever you ſhall ask, that will I do*, ſays our Saviour. God having eſtabliſht this intercourſe, and engag'd his Truth and Goodneſs in it, that if they call on him, they ſhall be heard and anſwered. If they prepare the Heart to call, he will incline his ear to hear; and our Saviour hath aſſur'd us, that we may build upon his Goodneſs, and the affection of a Father in him; that *he will give good things to them that ask*, ſays one Evangeliſt, and *the holy Spirit to them that ask it*, ſays another; as being the good indeed, the higheſt of Gifts, and the ſum of all good Things, and that which his Children are moſt earneſt ſupplicants for. Prayer for Grace doth, as it were, ſet the Mouth of the Soul to the Spring, draws

from Jeſus Chriſt, and is repleniſht out of his fullneſs, thirſting after it, and drawing from it that way.

And for this reaſon is it, that our Saviour, and from him, and according to his example, the Apoſtles recommend Prayer ſo much. *Watch and pray*, ſays our Saviour, and St. *Paul*, *pray continually*. And our Apoſtle here particularly ſpecifies this, as the grand means of attaining that conformity with Chriſt, which he preſſes, this is the high-way to it, *be ſober, and watch unto prayer*. He that is much in prayer, ſhall grow rich in grace; he ſhall thrive and increaſe moſt, that is buſieſt in this, which is our very traffick with Heaven, and fetches the moſt precious commodities thence, he that ſets oftneſt out theſe Ships of *deſire*, makes the moſt Voyages to that Land of Spices and Pearls, ſhall be ſure to improve his ſtock moſt, and have moſt of Heaven upon Earth.

But the true art of this trading is very rare; every trade hath ſomething wherein the skill of them lies; but this is deep and ſupernatural, is not reacht by humane induſtry; induſtry is to be uſed in it, but we muſt know it comes from above, the faculty of it, that Spirit of Prayer; without which Learning, and Wit, and religious Breeding can do nothing. Therefore this to be our prayer often, our great ſuit for the Spirit of Prayer, that we may ſpeak the Language of the Sons of God by the Spirit of God, which alone teaches the Heart to pronounce aright thoſe things, that the Tongue of many Hypocrites can articulate well to mans ear; and only the Children in that right ſtrain, that takes him, call God their Father, and cry unto him as their Father; and therefore many a poor unlettered Chriſtian, ſo far outſtrips your School-Rabbies in this faculty, becauſe it is not effectually taught in

theſe.

theſe lower Academies; they muſt be in God's own School, Children of his Houſe, that ſpeak this Language, Men may give Spiritual Rules and Directions in this, and ſuch as may be uſeful, drawn from the word, that furniſhes us with all needful Precepts, but you are ſtill to bring theſe into the ſeat of this faculty of prayer, the Heart, and ſtamp them upon it, and ſo to teach it to pray, without which there is no prayer; this is the prerogative Royal of him, that framed the Heart of Man within him.

But for advancing in this, growing more skillful in it, it is, with continual dependence on the Spirit, to be much uſed; praying much thou ſhalt be bleſt with much faculty for it, ſo then askeſt thou, what ſhall I do that I may learn to pray? there be things here to be conſidered, that are expreſt as ſerving this end, but for preſent this and chiefly this, by praying thou ſhalt learn to pray, thou ſhalt both obtain more of the Spirit, and find more the chearful working of it in Prayer, when thou putteſt it often to that work, for which it is received, and wherein it is delighted; and as both advantaging all Graces, and the Grace of Prayer it ſelf, this frequency and abounding in Prayer is here very clearly intended, in that the Apoſtle makes it as the main of our work that we have to do, and would keep our hearts in a conſtant aptneſs for it; *be ſober and watch*; to what end? *unto prayer.*

Be ſober and watch.] They that have no better, muſt make the beſt they can of carnal delights: it is no wonder they take as large a ſhare of them as they can bear, and ſometimes more: But the Chriſtian is called to a more excellent eſtate, and higher pleaſures; ſo that he may behold men glutting themſelves with theſe baſe things, and be as little moved to ſhare with them,

as men are taken with the pleaſure a Swine hath in weltring in the Mire.

It becomes the Heirs of Heaven to be far above the love of the Earth, and in the neceſſary uſe of any thing in it, ſtill to keep both within the due meaſure of their uſe, and their heart wholly diſingag'd from the affection of them. This is the Sobriety here exhorted.

Its true, that in the commoneſt ſenſe of the word, it is very commendable, and it is fit to be ſo conſidered by a Chriſtian, that he flie groſs intemperance, as a thing moſt contrary to his condition, and holy calling, and wholly inconſiſtent with the ſpiritual temper of a renewed mind, and thoſe exerciſes to which it is called, and its progreſs in its way homewards. It is a moſt unſeemly ſight to behold one, ſimply by outward profeſſion a Chriſtian, overtaken with ſurfeitting and drunkenneſs, much more, to be given to the vile cuſtom of it: all ſenſual delights, the filthy luſt of uncleanneſs go under the common name of Inſobriety, Intemperance, and they all degrade and deſtroy the noble Soul; are unworthy of Man, much more of a Chriſtian, and the contempt of them preſerves the Soul, and elevates it.

ἀκολασία.

But the Sobriety here recommended, though it takes in that too, yet reaches further than temperance in meat and drink. It is the ſpiritual temperance of a Chriſtian mind in all earthly things; as our Saviour joyns theſe together, Luk. 21. 34. *ſurfeiting and drunkenneſs, and cares of this life*: and under the cares are all the exceſſive deſires and delights of this life, which canno: be followed, and attended without diſtempered carefullneſs.

Many that are ſober men, and of temperate diet, yet are

are ſpiritually intemperate, drunk with pride, or covetouſneſs, or paſſion, drunk with ſelf-love, and love of their pleaſures and eaſe, with love of the world, and the things of it, which cannot conſiſt with the love of God, as St. *John* tells us: drunk with the inordinate unlawful love even of their lawful calling, and the lawful gain they purſue by it, their hearts going after it, and ſo reeling to and fro, never fixed on God and heavenly Things; but either hurried up and down with unceſſant buſineſs, or if ſometimes at eaſe, it is, as the eaſe of a drunken man, not compos'd to better and wiſer thoughts, but falling into a dead ſleep, contrary to the watching here joyned with ſobriety.

Watch.] There is a Chriſtian Rule to be obſerved in the very moderating of bodily ſleep, and that particularly for the intereſt of Prayer; but Watching, as Sobriety here, is chiefly the ſpiritual circumſpectneſs and vigilancy of the mind, in a wary walking poſture, that it be not ſurprized by the aſſaults or ſlights of Satan, by the World, nor its neareſt and moſt deceiving enemy, the corruption that dwells within, that being ſo near, doth moſt readily watch unperceived advantages, and eaſily circumvents us, *Heb.* 12. 1. The Soul of a Chriſtian being ſurrounded with enemies of ſo great, both power and wrath, and ſo watchful to undoe it, ſhould it not be watchful for its own ſafety, and live in a military vigilancy continually, keeping conſtant watch and ſentinel, and ſuffering nothing to paſs that may carry the leaſt ſuſpicion of danger; to be diſtruſtful and jealous of all the motions of his own Heart, and the ſmilings of the World, and in relation to theſe, it will be a wiſe courſe to take that word as a good

νῆφε καὶ μέμνησο ἀπιστεῖν

good caveat, *be watchful, and remember to miſtruſt.* Under the Garment of ſome harmleſs pleaſure, or ſome lawful liberties, may be conveyed into thy Soul ſome thief or traytor, that will either betray thee to the enemy, or at leaſt pilfer, and ſteal of the precioueſt things thou haſt. Do we not by experience find, how eaſily our fooliſh hearts are ſeduc'd and deceived, and ſo apt to deceive themſelves? and by things that ſeem to have no evil in them, yet are drawn from the height of affection to our higheſt good; and from our Communion with God, and ſtudy to pleaſe him, which ſhould not be intermitted, for then it will abate, but ought ſtill be growing.

2. Now the Relation of theſe is clear, they are inſeparably link't together, each of them aſſiſtant and helpful to the other in their nature, as they are here in the words, *Sobriety* the friend of *watchfulneſs*, and *prayer* of both. Intemperance doth of neceſſity draw on ſleep; exceſſive eating or drinking ſending up too many, and ſo groſs vapours, ſurcharge the brain; and when the body is thus deaded, how unfit is it for any active imployment? Thus the mind by a ſurcharge of delights, or deſires, or cares of earth, is made ſo heavy, and dull, that it cannot awake, hath not ſpiritual activeneſs, and clearneſs, that ſpiritual exerciſes, particularly Prayer, do require. Yea as bodily inſobriety, full feeding, and drinking, not only for the time, indiſpoſes to action, but by cuſtome of it, brings the body to ſo groſs and heavy a temper, that the very natural ſpirits cannot ſtir to and fro in it with freedom: but are clog'd, and ſtick as the Wheels of a Coach in a deep miry way. Thus is it with the Soul glutted with earthly things, the affections bemir'd with them, make it reſiſt and unactive in ſpiritual things, and the motions of the ſpirit heavy,

heavy, and obſcured in it, grows carnally ſecure, and ſleepy, prayer comes heavily off. But when the affections are ſoberly acted, and even in lawful things, that they have not liberty, with the reins laid on their Necks, to follow the World and carnal projects and delight, when the unavoidable affairs of this life are done with a ſpiritual mind, a heart kept free and diſingaged; Then is the Soul more nimble for ſpiritual things, for Divine Meditation, and Prayer, it can watch and continue in theſe things, and ſpend it ſelf in that excellent way with more alacrity.

Again, as the Sobriety, and the watchful temper attending it, enables for Prayer, ſo Prayer preſerves theſe, it winds up the Soul from the Earth, raiſes it above theſe things that intemperance feeds on, acquaints it with the tranſcending ſweetneſs of Divine Comforts, the love and the lovelineſs of Jeſus Chriſt, and theſe moſt powerfully wean the Soul from theſe low creeping pleaſures, that the World gapes after, and ſwallows with ſuch greedineſs. He that is admitted to neareſt intimacy with the King, and is called daily to his preſence, not only in the view and company of others, but likewſe in ſecret, will he be ſo mad, as to ſit down and drink with the kitchin boys, or the common guards, ſo far below what he may enjoy? ſurely no.

Prayer being our near Communion with the great God, certainly it ſublimates the Soul, and makes it look down upon the baſe ways of the World with diſdain, and deſpiſe the truly beſotting pleaſures of it. Yea the Lord doth ſometime fill theſe Souls, that converſe much with him, with ſuch beautiful delights, ſuch inebriating ſweetneſs, as I may call it, that 'tis in a happy manner drunk with thoſe; and the more of this,

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the more is the Soul above baſe intemperance in the delights of the World: as common drunkenneſs makes a Man leſs than a Man; this makes him more; that throws him below himſelf, makes him a beaſt; this raiſes him above, makes him an Angel.

Would you (as ſure you ought) have much faculty for Prayer, and be frequent in it, and find much the pure ſweetneſs of it, then deny your ſelves more the muddy pleaſures and ſweetneſs of the World? if you would pray much, and with much advantage, then *be ſober and watch unto prayer?* ſuffer not your hearts to long ſo after eaſe, and wealth, and eſteem in the World: theſe will make your hearts, if they mix with them, become like them, and take their quality, will make them groſs, and earthly, and unable to mount up; will clog the wings of prayer, and you ſhall find the loſs when your Soul is heavy and drowſie, and falls off from delighting in God, and your Communion with him. Will ſuch things, as thoſe you follow, be able to countervail your damage? can they ſpeak you peace, and uphold you in a day of darkneſs and diſtreſs, or may it not be ſuch now, as will make them all a burden and vexation to you? But on the otherſide, the more you abate and let go of theſe, and come empty and hungry to God in prayer, the more room ſhall you have for his conſolations, and therefore the more plentifully will he pour in of them, and enrich your Soul with them the more, the leſs you take in of the other.

2. Would you have your ſelves raiſed to, and continued and advanced in a ſpiritual heavenly temper, free from the ſurfeits of earth, and awake, and active for heaven, be unceſſant in prayer?

But thou wilt ſay, I find nothing but heavy indiſpoſedneſs in it, nothing but roving, and vanity of heart: and

and ſo, though I have uſed it ſometime, its ſtill unprofitable and uncomfortable to me? although it be ſo, yet hold on, give it not over; or need I ſay this to thee, though it were referr'd to thy ſelf? wouldeſt thou forſake it, and leave off? then what wouldeſt thou do next, for if no comfort in it, far leſs any for thee, in any other way. If tentation ſhould ſo far prevail with thee, as to try intermiſſion; either thou wouldeſt be forced to return to it preſently, or certainly wouldeſt fall into a more grievous condition, and after horrours and laſhings, muſt at length come back to it again, or periſh for ever. Therefore however it go, continue praying, ſtrive to believe that love thou canſt not ſee: for where ſight is abridg'd, there it is proper for faith to work: if thou canſt do no more, lie before thy Lord and look to him. Lord here I am, thou maiſt quicken and revive me, if thou wilt, and I truſt thou wilt, but if I muſt do it, I will lie at thy feet; my life is in thy hand, and thou art goodneſs and mercy; while I have breath I will cry, or if I cannot cry, yet I will wait on and look to thee.

One thing forget not, that the ready way to riſe out of this ſad, yet ſafe eſtate, is to be much in viewing the Mediator, and interpoſing him betwixt the fathers view, and thy Soul. Some that do orthodoxly believe this to be right, yet, as often befals us in other things of this kind, they do not ſo conſider, and uſe it in their neceſſity, as becomes, and therefore fall ſhort of comfort: he hath declared it, *no Man comes to the Father but by me.* How vile ſoever, put thy ſelf under his robe, and into his hand, and he will lead thee in to the Father, and preſent thee acceptable and blameleſs: The Father ſhall receive thee, and declare himſelf well pleaſed with thee in his well beloved Son, who hath covered thee with his righteouſneſs and brought thee ſo Cloathed, and ſet thee before him.

3. The third thing is the reaſon binding on theſe, *The end of all things is at hand.*

This is needful often to be remembred, for even believers too readily forget it, and its very ſutable to the Apoſtles foregoing diſcourſe of Judgement, and to his preſent exhortation to ſobriety, and watchfulneſs unto prayer, even the general end of all at hand, though ſince the Apoſtle writ this many Ages are paſt. For (1.) The Apoſtles uſually ſpeak of the whole time after the coming of Jeſus Chriſt in the fleſh as the laſt time, for that two double Chiliads of years paſt before it, the one before, the other under the Law, and in this third, it is conceived, ſhall be the end of all things. And the Apoſtles ſeem by divers expreſſions to have apprehended it in their days not far off. So St. *Paul* 1. *Theſſ.* 4. 17. *We which are alive, and remain, ſhall be caught up together with them in the Clouds.* As not impoſſible, that it might come in their time; which put him upon ſome explication of that correction of their miſtakes, in his next Epiſtle to them, wherein notwithſtanding he ſeems not to aſſert any great tract of time to interveen, but in that time great things were firſt to come. (2.) However this might always have been ſaid in reſpect of ſucceeding Eternity, the whole duration of the World is not conſiderable, and to the eternal Lord that made it, and hath appointed its period, a thouſand years are as one day. We think a thouſand years a great matter in reſpect of our ſhort life, and more through our ſhort ſightedneſs, that look not through to eternal life: but what is the utmoſt length of time, were it millions of years to a thought of eternity. We find much room in this earth, but to the vaſt heavens, it is but as a point. Thus that which is but ſmall to us, a field or little incloſure: a Fly, had it skill, would divide it into provinces,

vinces, in proportion to it ſelf. (3.) To each man the end of all things, is even after our meaſure, at hand; for when he dies, the World ends for him. Now this conſideration fits the Subject, and preſſes it ſtrongly, ſeeing all things ſhall be quickly at an end, even the frame of Heaven and Earth, why ſhould we, knowing this, and having higher hopes, lay ſo much out of our deſires and endeavours upon theſe things, that are poſting to ruine; its no hard notion to be ſober, and watchful to prayer, to be trading that way, and ſeeking higher things, very moderate in theſe, ſeeing they are of ſo ſhort a date: and as in themſelves and their utmoſt term, ſo more to each of us particularly who are ſo ſoon cut off, and flee away; why ſhould our hearts cleave to thoſe things from which we ſhall ſo quickly part, and if we will not freely part and let go, we ſhall be pulled away, and pull'd with the more pain, the cloſer we cleave, and faſter we are glued to them.

This the Apoſtle St. *Paul* caſts in ſeaſonably, though many think it not ſeaſonable at ſuch times, when he is diſcourſing of a great point of our life, marriage, to work Chriſtian minds to a holy freedom both ways, whether they uſe it or no, not to view it, nor any thing here with the World's Spectacles, that make it look ſo big and ſo fixed, but to ſee in the ſtream of time as paſſing by, and no ſo great matter, the faſhion of this World paſſeth away, as a pageant or ſhew in a Street, going through and quickly out of ſight: what became of all the marriage Solemnities of Kings and Princes of former Ages, that they were ſo taken up with in their time? when we read of them deſcribed in Hiſtory, they are as a night dream, or a day fancy, that paſſes through the wind, and vaniſhes.

Oh! fooliſh man that hunts ſuch poor things, and will not be called off, till death benight him, and his great work not done, yea, not begun; no nor ſeriouſly thought of, your Buildings, your Trading, your Lands, your Matches, and Friendſhips, and Projects when they take with you, and your hearts are after them, ſay, but, for how long all theſe? *their end is at hand*; *therefore be ſober, and watch unto prayer*, learn to divide better, more hours for it, and fewer for them; your whole heart for it, and none of it for them; ſeeing they will fail you ſo quickly, prevent them, come free, lean not on them till they break, and you fall into the pit.

'Tis reported of one that hearing that 5*th.* of *Geneſis* read, ſo *long lives*, and yet the burden ſtill, *they died, Enoch lived* 905, *and he died*; *Seth* 912, *and he died*; *Methuſelah* 969, *and he died*; took ſo deep the thought of death and eternity, that it changed his whole frame, and ſet him from a voluptuous to a moſt ſtrict and pious courſe of life, how ſmall a word will do much, when God ſets it into the heart. But ſure this one thing would make the Soul more calm, and ſober in the purſuit of preſent things; if their term were truly computed and conſidered. How ſoon ſhall youth, and health, and carnal delights be at an end? how ſoon ſhall State craft, and King-craft, and all the great Projects of the higheſt Wits and Spirits be laid in the duſt? This caſts a damp upon all thoſe fine things; but to a Soul acquainted with God, and in affection removed hence already, no thought ſo ſweet as this; helps much to carry it chearfully through wreſtlings and difficulties; through better and worſe, they ſee Land near, and ſhall quickly be at home, that's the way. *The end of all things is at hand:* an end of a

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few poor delights, and the many vexations of this wretched life; an end of tentations and ſins, the worſt of all evils; yea, an end of the imperfect faſhion of our beſt things here, an end of prayer it ſelf, to which ſucceeds that new Song of endleſs praiſes.

Verſe 8.

And above all things have fervent charity among your ſelves: for charity ſhall cover the multitude of ſins.

THE Graces of the Spirit are an entire frame making up the new Creature, and none of them can be wanting, therefore the Doctrine and Exhortation of the Apoſtles, ſpeak of them uſually, not only as inſeparable, but as one. But there is amongſt them all, none more cemprehenſive, than this of *Love*: inſomuch that St. *Paul* calls it the *fullfilling of the Law*; love to God the ſum of all relative to him, and ſo likewiſe is it towards our Brethren. Love to God is that, which makes us live to him, and be wholly his, that which moſt powerfully weans us from this World, and cauſeth us delight in communion with him, in holy Meditation and Prayer. Now the Apoſtle adding here of the duty of Chriſtians to one another, gives this the prime, yea, the ſum of all: *Above all have fervent love.*

Concerning this, Conſider, (1.) The Nature of it. (2.) The Eminent Degree of it. (3) The Excellent Fruit of it.

1. It is an union, therefore called a bond or chain that

that links things together. 2. 'Tis not a meer external union that holds in cuſtoms, or words, or outward carriage, but an union of hearts. 3. 'Tis here not a natural, but a ſpiritual ſupernatural union; it is that mutual love of Chriſtians as Brethren. There is a common benevolence and good-will due to all; but a more particular uniting affection interchangeably one, amongſt Chriſtians.

The Devil being an Apoſtate Spirit, revolted and ſeparated from God, doth naturally project and work diviſion. This was his firſt exploit, and ſtill his grand deſign and buſineſs in the World: he firſt divided Man from God, put them at an enmity by the firſt Sin of our firſt Parents, and the next we read of in their firſt Child, was enmity againſt his Brother, ſo Satan is called by our Saviour juſtly, a *liar, and a murderer from the beginning*; murdered man by lying, and made him a murderer.

And as the Devil's work is Diviſion, Chriſt's work is Union; he came to diſſolve the works of Satan by a contrary work, he came to make all Friends, to recollect and reunite all Men to God, and Man to Man; and both thoſe unions hold in him by vertue of that marvellous union of Natures in his Perſon; and that Myſterious Union of the Perſons of Believers with him as their Head, ſo the word, *Eph.* 1. 10. ἀνακεφαλαιώσασθαι, To unite all in one head.

Thus his great project in all: this he died and ſuffered for, and this he prayed for, *John* 17. and this is ſtrong above all ties, natural or civil, union in Chriſt; this they have that are indeed Chriſtians, this they pretend to have, if they underſtood it, that profeſs themſelves Chriſtians. If natural friendſhip be capable of that expreſſion *one ſpirit in two bodies*, Chriſtian

ſtian union hath it much more really and properly: for there is indeed one Spirit more extenſive in all the Faithful; yea, ſo one Spirit that it makes them up into one body more intenſive: they are not ſo much as divers bodies, only divers members of one body.

Now this love of our Brethren, is not another from the love of God, 'tis but the ſtreaming forth of it, or the reflex of it: Jeſus Chriſt ſending in his Spirit into the heart, unites it to God in himſelf by love, which is all indeed; that loving of God ſupreamly and entirely with all the mind and ſoul, all the combined ſtrength of the heart, and then that ſame love, firſt wholly carried to him; is not divided or impaired by the love of our Brethren; 'tis but dilated and derived from the other: he allows, yea, commands, yea, cauſes, that it ſtream forth, and act it ſelf toward them, remaining ſtill in him, as in its ſource and center, beginning at him, and returning to him, as the Beams that diffuſe themſelves from the Sun, and the Light and Heat, yet are not divided, or cut off from it, but remain in it; and by emanation iſſue from it. Loving our Brethren in God, and for him, not only becauſe he commands us to love them, and ſo the Law of Love to him ties us to it, as his Will; but becauſe that love of God doth naturally extend it ſelf thus, and acts thus, in loving our Brethren after a Spiritual Chriſtian manner, we do even in that love our God.

Loving of God makes us one with God, and ſo gives us an impreſſion of his divine bounty in his Spirit, and his love, the proper work of his Spirit dwelling in the Heart, enlarges and dilates it, as ſelf-love contracts and ſtreightens it, ſo that as ſelf-love is the perfect oppoſite to the love of God, it is likewiſe ſo to brotherly-love, ſhuts out and undoes both; and where the love

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of God is rekindled, and enters the Heart, it deſtroys and burns up ſelf love, and ſo carries the affection up to himſelf, and in him forth to our Brethren.

This is that bitter root of all enmity in man againſt God and amongſt Men, againſt one another, *Self*, Man's Heart turned from God towards himſelf; and the very work of renewing Grace is, to annul and deſtroy Self, to replace God in his Right, that the Heart and all its Affections and Motions be at his diſpoſe: ſo that inſtead of ſelf-will and ſelf-love that rul'd before, now the Will of God, and the Love of God commands all.

And where it is thus, there this φιλαδέλφια, this love of our Brethren, will be ſincere. Whence is it that Wars, and Conteſts, and mutual Diſgracings and Deſpiſings abound ſo; but that men love themſelves, and nothing but themſelves, or in relation to themſelves, as it pleaſes or is advantageous to them; that's the Standard and Rule, all is carried by intereſt, ſo thence are ſtriſes and defamings, and bitterneſs againſt one another; but the Spirit of Chriſt coming in, undoes all ſelfiſhneſs. And now according to God, what he wills and loves, that's Law, and a powerful Law, ſo written on the Heart, this Law of Love, that it obeys not unpleaſantly; but with delight, no conſtraint but the ſweet conſtraint of love; to forgive a wrong, to love even thine enemy for him, is not only feiſible now, but delectable, that ere while thou thoughteſt impoſſible.

That Spirit of Chriſt is all ſweetneſs and love, ſo calms and compoſes the Heart, that peace with God, and that unſpeakably bleſſed correſpondence of love with him, doth ſo fill the Soul with lovingneſs and ſweetneſs, that it can breath nothing elſe, hates nothing but

but ſin, pities the ſinner, and carries to the worſt that love of good-will, deſiring their return and ſalvation: but to thoſe, in whom appears the Image of their Father, thoſe their heart cleaves to, as Brethren indeed. No advantages natural, no birth, no beauty, nor wit draws a Chriſtian's love ſo much, as the reſemblance of Chriſt, wherever that is found, it is comely, and lovely to a Soul that loves him.

Much communion with God ſweetens and calms the mind, cures the diſtempers of paſſion and pride, that are the avowed enemies of love, particularly Prayer and Love ſuit well. (1.) Prayer diſpoſes to this love; *he that loveth not, knoweth not God*, ſaith the beloved Apoſtle, *for God is love*; he that is moſt converſant with love, the ſpring of where 'tis pureſt and fulleſt, cannot but have the fulleſt meaſure of it, flowing in from thence into his heart, and flowing forth from thence, unto his Brethren; if they, that uſe the ſociety of mild and good men, are inſenſibly aſſimilated to them, grow like them, and contract ſomewhat of their temper; much more doth familiar walking with God powerfully transform the Soul into his likeneſs; makes it merciful and loving, and ready to forgive, as he is.

2. This love diſpoſes to prayer, to pray together, hearts muſt be conſorted and tun'd together: otherwiſe how can they ſound the ſame Suits harmoniouſly. How unpleaſant in the exquiſite ear of God, that made the ear, are the jarring diſunited hearts, that often ſeem to joyn in the ſame prayer, and yet are not ſet together in love: and when thou prayeſt alone, thy heart imbitter'd and diſaffected to thy Brother, altho' upon an offence done to thee, 'tis as a miſtuned Inſtrument, the Strings are not accorded, ſo are not in

tune amongſt themſelves, and ſo the ſound is harſh, and offenſive; try it well thy ſelf, and thou wilt perceive it; how much more he, to whom thou pray'ſt when thou art ſtirr'd, and in paſſion againſt thy Brother, or not on the contrary, lovingly affected towards him; what broken diſordered unfaſtened ſtuff are thy requeſts, therefore the Lord will have this done firſt, the Heart tun'd, *go thy way*, (ſays he,) *leave thy Gift, and be reconcil'd to thy Brother*, &c.

Why is this ſo much recommended by Chriſt, and ſo little received by Chriſtians, given by him as the cogniſance and badge of his Followers, and of them that pretend to be ſo, ſo few that wear it. Oh! little real Chriſtianity were more worth than all that empty profeſſion and diſcourſe, that we think ſo much of. Hearts receiving the mould and ſtamp of this Rule; theſe were living Copies of the Goſpel; *ye are our Epiſtle*, ſays the Apoſtle. We come together, and hear, and ſpeak ſometimes of one Grace, and ſometimes of another; and the moſt never ſeek to have their hearts enricht with the poſſeſſion of any of them. We ſearch not to the bottom the perverſneſs of our Nature, and the guiltineſs that is upon us in theſe; or we ſhift off the Conviction, and find a way to forget it when the hour's done.

That accurſed root, ſelf-love, that makes man an enemy to God, and Men enemies and devourers one of another, who ſets to the diſcovery and the diſplanting of it, bends the force of holy Endeavours and Prayer, ſupplicates the hand of God for the plucking of it up? Some Natures are quieter and make leſs noiſe, but till the heart be poſſeſt with the love of God, it ſhall never truely love either men, in that way due to all, or the Children of God in their peculiar relation.

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Among your ſelves, &c.] That is here the point, the peculiar love of the Saints as thy Brethren, glorying and rejoycing in the ſame Father, the Sons of God begotten again to that lively hope of glory: now theſe as they owe a bountiful diſpoſition to all, they are mutually to love one another as Brethren.

Thou, that hateſt and reproacheſt the godly, and the more they ſtudy to walk as the Children of their holy Father, the more thou hateſt them, art glad to find a ſpot to point at on them, or wilt daſh mire on them where thou findeſt none; know, that thou art in this, the enemy of God, that the indignity done to them, Jeſus Chriſt will take it, as done to himſelf: truely *we know that we have paſſed from death unto life, becauſe we love the Brethren: he that loveth not his Brother abideth in death.* So then renounce this Word, or elſe believe that thou art yet far from the Life of Chriſt, that ſo hateſt it in others. Oh! but they are but a number of Hypocrites, wilt thou ſay: Brethren, if they be ſo, this declares ſo much the more thy extream hatred of holineſs, that canſt not endure ſo much as the Picture of it, canſt not ſee any thing like it, but thou muſt let fly at it, and this argues thy deep hatred of God, holineſs in a Chriſtian as the Image of God, and the Hyprocrite in the reſemblance of it, is the Image of a Chriſtian, ſo thou hateſt the very Image of the Image of God: for deceive not thy ſelf, it is not the latent evil in hypocriſie, but the apparent good in it that thou hateſt. The prophane Man thinks himſelf a great Zealot againſt Hypocriſie, he is ſtill crying out of it, but its only this he is angry at, that all ſhould not be ungodly, wicked enemies of Religion, as he is, either diſſolute, or meerly civil; and the civil man is readily the bittereſt enemy of all

ſtrictneſs beyond his own ſize, as condemning him, and therefore he cries it down, as all of it falſe and counterfeit wares.

Let me intreat you, if you would not be found fighters againſt God, let no revilings be heard amongſt you, againſt any that are or ſeem to be Followers of Holineſs: if ye will not reverence it your ſelves, yet reverence it in others, at leaſt do not reproach it. It ſhould be your ambition, elſe why are you willing to be called Chriſtians: but if you will not *purſue holineſs*, yet perſecute it not: if you will not *have fervent love to the Saints*, yet burn not with infernal heat of fervent hatred againſt them; for truly that is one of the likelieſt pledge of theſe flames, and ſociety with damned Spirits; as love to the Children of God is, of that inheritance and ſociety with them in glory.

2. You that are Brethren and united by that pureſt and ſtrongeſt tie; as you are one in your head, in your life derived from him, in your hopes of glory with him; ſeek to be more one in heart, in fervent love one to another in him. Conſider the combinements and concurrences of the wicked againſt him, and his little flock; and let this provoke you to more united affections. Shall the Scales of Leviathan (as one alludes) ſtick ſo cloſe together, and ſhall not the Members of Chriſt be more one and undivided: you that can reſent it, ſtir up your ſelves, to bewail the preſent diviſions and fears of more, ſuit earneſtly for that one Spirit to act and work more powerfully in the hearts of his people.

2dly. The eminent degree of this love. 1. Its eminency amongſt Graces above all. 2. The high meaſure of it required fervent love [ἐκτενῆ,] a high bent, or ſtrain of it, that which acts ſtrongly, and carries far.

1. 'Tis

1. 'Tis eminent, that which indeed among Chriſtians preſerves all, and knits all together; therefore called, *Col.* 3. *the bond of perfection*, all bound up by it. How can they pray together, advance the name of their God, keep in and ſtir up all Grace in one another, unleſs they be united in love? how can they have acceſs to God, or fellowſhip with him, *who is love*, as St. *John* ſpeaks: if inſtead of this ſweet temper there be rancours and bitterneſs amongſt them? ſo then uncharity and diviſions amongſt Chriſtians, doth not only hinder their civil good, but their ſpiritual much more: and that not only *lucro ceſſante* (as they ſpeak) interrupting the ways of mutual profiting, but *damno emergente*, it doth really damage them, and brings them to loſſes; preys upon their Graces, as hot withering winds on Herbs and Plants: where the Heart entertains either bitter malice, or but uncharitable prejudices, there will be a certain decay of ſpiritualneſs in the whole Soul.

2. Again, for the degree of this love required, it is not a cold indifferency, a negative love, as I may call it, or not willing of evil, nor a lukewarm wiſhing of good, but fervent and active love: for if fervent, it will be active, a fire will not be ſmother'd, it will find way to extend it ſelf.

3. The Fruits of this Love follow. 1. *Covering of evil*, in this verſe. 2. *Doing of good*, verſe 9. *&c.*

Covers.] This from *Solomon*, and here as its repreſented to be thus done, as a main act of love: ſo love is commended by it, as a moſt uſeful, and laudible act of it, *covers ſins*, and *a multitude of ſins*.

Solomon ſaith, as the Oppoſition clears the Senſe, *hatred ſtirs ſtrife*, aggravates and makes the worſt of all, *but love covers a multitude of ſins*; delights not in

undue

undue diſcloſing of Brethrens failings, doth not eye them rigidly, nor expoſe them willingly to the eyes of others.

Now this commends charity, in regard of its continual uſefullneſs and neceſſity this way, conſidering human frailty; and *that in many things* (as St. *James* ſpeaks) *we all offend*; ſo that this is ſtill needful on all hands: what do they think that are ſtill picking at every appearing infirmity of their Brethren; know they not that the frailties that cleave to the Saints of God while they are here, doth ſtand in need of, and call for this mutual office of love to cover and paſs by; who is there that ſtands not in need of this? if none, why are there any that deny it to others? there can be no ſociety nor entertaining of Chriſtian converſe without it, giving as we ſpeak the allowance, reckoning to meet with defects, and weakneſſes on all hands, covering the failings one of another, ſeeing its needful from each to another.

Again, as the neceſſity of this commends it, and the love whence it flows; ſo there is that laudible ingenuity in it, that ſhould draw us to the liking of it; 'tis the bent of the baſeſt and worthleſſeſt Spirits to be buſie in the ſearch and diſcovery of others failings, paſſing by all that is commendable and imitable, as baſe Flies readily ſitting on any little ſore they can find, rather than upon the ſound parts: but the more Excellent Mind of a real Chriſtian, loves not unneceſſarily to touch, no nor to look upon them, rather turns away, never uncover their Brothers ſore, but to cure it; and no more than of neceſſity muſt be for that end, would willingly have them hid, that neither they nor others might ſee them.

This bars not the judicial trial of ſcandalous offences, nor

nor the delation of them, and bringing them under due cenſure: the forbearing of this is not charity, but both iniquity, and cruelty, and this cleaves too much to many of us; they that cannot paſs the leaſt touch of a wrong done to themſelves, can digeſt twenty high injuries done to God by prophane perſons about them, and reſent it not, and ſuch may be aſſured, they are yet deſtitute of love to God, and of Chriſtian love to their Brethren which ſprings from it.

The uncovering of ſin neceſſary to the curing of it is not only no breach of charity, but is indeed a main point of charity, and the neglect of it the higheſt kind of cruelty. But further then that goes, certainly this rule teaches the veiling of our Brethrens infirmities from the eyes of others, and even from our own, that we look not on them with rigour; no, nor without compaſſion.

Firſt. Love is witty in finding out the faireſt conſtructions of things doubtful, and this is a great point Take me the beſt action that can be named, pride, and malice ſhall find a way to diſgrace it, and put a hard viſage on't. Again, what is not undeniably evil, love will turn all the ways of viewing it, till it find the beſt and moſt favourable.

2. Where the thing is ſo a ſin, that this way of covering it can have no place, yet then will love conſider what may leſſen it moſt, whether a ſurprize or ſtrength of tentation, or ignorance, as our Saviour, *Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do,* or natural complexion, or at leaſt will ſtill take in humane frailty, to turn all the bitterneſs of paſſion into ſweet compaſſion.

3. All private reproofs, and where conſcience requires publick delation and cenſure, even theſe will be

be ſweetned in that compaſſion that flows from love, if ſuch a ſore as muſt not be let lie covered up, leaſt it prove deadly: ſo that it muſt be uncovered to be lanc't, and cut, that it may be cur'd this to be done as loving the Soul of the Brother. Where the rule of conſciences urges it not, then thou muſt bury it; and be ſo far from delighting to divulge ſuch things, that as far as without partaking in it thou mayeſt, thou muſt veil it from all eyes, and try the way of private admonition, and if the party appear to be humble and willing to be reclaimed, then forget it, caſt it quite out of thy thoughts, that as much as may thou mayeſt learn to forget it more. But this, I ſay, to be done with the tendereſt bowels of pity, feeling the cuts thou art forc't to give in that neceſſary inciſion, and uſe mildneſs and patience. Thus the Apoſtle inſtructs his *Timothy. Reprove, rebuke, exhort,* but do it with *long ſuffering, with all long ſuffering.* 2. Tim. 4. 2. And even *they that oppoſe, inſtruct,* ſays he, *with meekneſs; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth.* chap. 2. verſe. 25,

4. If thou be intereſſed in the offence, even by unfeigned free forgiveneſs, ſo far as thy concern goes, let it be, as if it had not been. And though thou meet with many of theſe; Charity will gain, and grow by ſuch occaſions. And the more it hath covered, the more it can cover, *cover a multitude,* ſays our Apoſtle, *Covers all ſins,* ſays *Solomon:* yea though thou be often put to't by the ſame party, what made thee forgive once, well improved, will ſtretch our Saviours rule to ſeventy times ſeven times in one day.

And truly even this, Men miſtake groſly, that think it is greatneſs of Spirit to reſent wrongs, and baſeneſs to forgive them; on the contrary, it is the only excellent

lent Spirit ſcarce to feel a wrong, or feeling, ſtraight to forgive it; 'tis the greateſt, and the beſt of Spirits that enables to this, the Spirit of God, that Dove like Spirit, that reſted on our Lord Jeſus, and from him derived to all that are in him. I pray you think, is it not a token of a tender ſickly body, to be altered with every touch from every blaſt it meets with? and thus is it of a poor weak ſickly Spirit, to endure nothing, to be diſtemper'd at the leaſt air of an injury; yea with the very fancy of it, where there is none.

Inf. 1. Learn then to beware of theſe evils, that are contrary to this Charity, do not diſpute with your ſelves in rigid remarks and cenſures, when the matter will bear any better ſenſe.

2. Do not delight in tearing a wound wider, and ſtretching a real failing to the utmoſt.

3. In handling of it, ſtudy gentleneſs, and pity, and meekneſs: theſe will advance the cure, whereas thy flying out into paſſion againſt thy fallen Brother, will prove nothing, but as the putting of thy nail into the ſore, that will readily rankle it, and make it worſe: even ſin, may be ſinfully reproved, and how thinkeſt thou, that ſin ſhall redreſs ſin, and reduce the ſinner.

There is a great deal of ſpiritual art, and skill in dealing with another's ſin, and requires much ſpiritualneſs of mind, and much prudence, and much love, a mind clear from paſſion, for that blinds the eye, and makes the hand rough, that a Man neither rightly ſees, nor handles the ſore he goes about to cure, and many are loſt through the ignorance, and neglect of that due temper to be brought to this work. Men think otherwiſe, that their rigours are much ſpiritualneſs, but they miſtake it, *Gal.* 6. 1. *Brethren, if a Man be overtaken in*

a fault, yea which are ſpiritual, reſtore ſuch an one in the ſpirit of meekneſs, conſidering thy ſelf, leaſt thou be alſo tempted.

4. For thy ſelf; as an offence touches thee, learn to delight as much in that Divine way of forgiveneſs, as carnal minds do in that baſe and inhumane way of revenge. 'tis not, as they Judge, a glory to ruffle and ſwagger for every thing, but the *glory of Man to paſs by a tranſgreſſion*, makes him God like. And conſider thou often, that love that covers all thine, that blood that was ſhed to waſh off thy guilt; needs any more be ſaid to gain all in this, that can be required of thee.

Now the other point of *doing good*, is. 1. In one particular, *ver.* 9. Then dilated to a general rule, *ver.* 20.

Verſe 9.

9. *Uſe Hoſpitality one to another without grudging.*

THE particular of *Hoſpitality* or kindneſs to ſtrangers, being in thoſe times, and places in much uſe in travel, and particulary needful often among Chriſtians one to another then, by reaſon of hot and general perſecutions; but under the name of this, are compris'd, I conceive, all other ſupply of the wants of our Brethren in outward things.

Now for this, the way and meaſure indeed muſt receive its proportion from the eſtate and ability of perſons. But certainly the great ſtraitning of hands in theſe

theſe things is more from the ſtraitneſs of hearts than of means: a large heart with a little eſtate, will do with much cheerfulneſs, and little noiſe; while hearts glewed to the poor riches they poſſeſs, or rather are poſſeſt by, can ſcarce part with any thing, till they be pull'd from all.

Now for ſupply of our brethrens neceſſities, one good help is, the retrenching of our own ſuperfluities, turn the ſtream into that channel where it will refreſh thy brethren, and enrich thy ſelf; and let it not run into the dead Sea; Thy vain exceſſive entertainments, thy gaudy variety of dreſſes, theſe thou doſt not challenge, thinking its of thine own, but know as follows, thou art but *Steward* of it, and this is not faithful laying out, canſt not anſwer it, yea its robbery thou robbeſt thy poor brethren that want neceſſaries, whilſt thou laviſheſt thus on unneceſſaries; ſuch a feaſt, ſuch a ſuit of apparel, direct robbry in the Lords eye, and the poor may cry, that is mine that you caſt away ſo vainly, by which both I and you might be profited. *Prov.* 3. 27. 28.

Without grudging.] Some look to the actions, but few to the intention and poſture of mind in them; and yet that is the main, 'tis all indeed, even with Men ſo far as they can perceive it, much more with thy Lord, who always perceives it to be full. He delights in the good he does his creatures: he would have them ſo to one another, eſpecially his Children to have this tract of his likeneſs. See then, when thou giveſt alms or entertaineſt a ſtranger, that there be nothing either of under grumbling, or crooked ſelf ſeeking in it. Let the left hand have no hand in it, not ſo much as know of it, as our Saviour directs, not to pleaſe Men, or to pleaſe thy ſelf, or ſimply out of a natural pity or conſideration of thy own poſſible incidency into the like

caſe, which many think very well, if they be ſo moved: but here a higher principle moving thee, love to God, and to thy Brother, in, and for him; this will make it cheerful, and pleaſant to thy ſelf, and well pleaſing to him, for whom thou doſt it. We loſe much in actions of themſelves good, both of piety and charity, through diſregard of our hearts in them: and nothing will prevail with us, to be more intent this way, to look more on our hearts, but this, to look more on him, that looks on them, and Judges, and accepts all according to them.

Though all the ſins of former Ages gather, and fall into the latter times, this is pointed out as the grand evil, *uncharity*. The Apoſtle St. *Paul*, 2. *Timoth.* 3. 2. tells that in the laſt days, Men *ſhall be covetous, ſlanderers, lovers of pleaſures, more than lovers of God*: But how, from whence all this confluence of evils. The ſpring of all ſet firſt, and that is the direct oppoſite of Chriſtian love, *they ſhall be* [φίλαυτοι] *lovers of themſelves*. This is it, that kills the love of God, and the love of our Brethren, and kindles that infernal fire of love to pleaſe themſelves, riches make Men voluptuous, and covetous, &c. Truly whatſoever become of Mens curious compute of times; this wretched ſelfneſs, and decay of love may ſave us this labour of much *Chronological* debate in this, and the certain character of them conclude, theſe to be the *latter times*, in a very ſtrict ſenſe. All other ſins are come down along, and run combined now, but truly uncharity is the main one, as old age is a rendevouze or meeting place of maladies, but eſpecially ſubject to cold diſeaſes; thus is it, in the old Age of the World many ſins, but eſpecially coldneſs of love, as our Saviour foretells it, that in *the laſt days the love of many ſhall wax cold*, as the diſeaſe

diſeaſes of the youth of the World, was the *abounding of luſt*, *Gen.* 6. ſo of its Age, *decay of love*, and as that heat called for a total deluge of waters, ſo this coldneſs for fire to the kindling an univerſal fire, that ſhall make an end of it, and the World together.

[*Aqua propter ardorem libidinis, ignis propter teporem charitatis.*]

But they alone are the happy Men, and have the advantage of all the World, in whom the World is burnt up before hand, by another fire, that Divine Fire of the love of God, kindled in their hearts, by which they aſcend up to him, and are reflected from him upon their Brethren with a benign heat and influence for their good. Oh! be unſatisfied with your ſelves, and reſtleſs till you find it thus, your hearts poſſeſt with this excellent grace of love, that you may have it, and uſe it, and it may grow by uſing, and acting. I could, methinks, heartily ſtudy on this, and weary you with the iterated preſſing this one thing, if there were hopes in ſo wearying you, to weary you out of theſe evils that are contrary to it, and in preſſing this grace, to make any real impreſſion of it upon your hearts: beſides all the further good that follows it, there is in this love it ſelf, ſo much peace, and ſweetneſs, that abundantly pays it ſelf, and all the labour of it; whereas pride, and malice do fill the heart with continual vexations, and diſquietneſs, and eat out the very bowels wherein they breed. Aſpire to this to be wholy bent, not only to procure, or deſire hurt to none; but to wiſh, and ſeek the good of all and for thoſe that are in Chriſt, ſure that will unite thy heart to them, and ſtir thee up, according to thy opportunities and power to do them good, as parts of Chriſt, of the ſame body with thy ſelf.

Ver.

Verſe 10.

10. *As every man hath received the Gift, even ſo miniſter the ſame one to another, as good Stewards of the manifold Grace of God.*

THIS is the rule concerning the Gifts and Graces beſtow'd on Men; and we have here. 1. Their difference in their kind and meaſure. 2. Their Concordance in their ſource and uſe.

1. Different in their kind, that expreſt in the firſt clauſe, *as every one hath received.* Then again in the laſt clauſe [ποικίλη χάρις] *various* or *manifold Grace*, where [χάρις] is all one with the former [χάρισμα] and largely taken in all kind of endowments, and furniture by which Men are enabled for mutual good. One Man hath Riches, another Authority and Command, another Wit or Eloquence, or learning: and ſome tho' eminent in ſome one, yet have a fuller conjuncture of divers of theſe. We find not more difference in viſages and ſtatures of body, then in qualifications, and abilities of the mind, which are the viſage and ſtature of it, yea the odds is far greater betwixt Man and Man in this than it can be in the other.

Now this difference accords well with the accordance there expreſt in their common ſpring and common uſe. For the variety of theſe many gifts ſuits well with the ſingular riches and wiſdom of their own giver, and with the common advantage and benefit of the many receivers. And in the uſefulneſs of that variety to the receivers, ſhines forth bounty and wiſdom of the giver in ſo ordering

ordering all that diverſity, to one excellent end; ſo this ποικίλη χάρις here, commends that πολυποίκιλος σοφία that the Apoſtle ſpeaks of, *Eph.* 3. 10.

There is ſuch an admirable beauty in this variety, ſuch a ſymmetry and contemperature of different, yea of contrary qualities, that ſpeaks his riches, that ſo divers gifts are from the ſame Spirit. A kind of, * *embroidering* of many collours, happily mixt as the Word [ποικίλλειν] ſignifies; as its in the frame of the natural body of Man as the leſſer World, and in the compoſure of the greater World; thus in the Church of God, the myſtical Body of Jeſus Chriſt exceeding both, in excellency and beauty.

* *The Pſalmiſt's Word for the body* Pſal. 139.

And as there is ſuch art in this contrivance, and ſuch comelineſs in the reſulting frame; ſo 'tis no leſs uſeful, and that commends mainly the thing it ſelf, and the Supream Wiſdom ordering it, that as in the body each part hath not only its place for proportion, and order, but each its uſe; and as in the World, each part is beneficial to another, ſo here, every mans gift relates, and is fitted to ſome uſe for the good of others.

Inſer. 1. The firſt thing meets us here is very uſeful to know, that all is *received*, and received of *gift*, of moſt *free gift*, ſo the words do carry. Now this would moſt reaſonably check all murmuring in thoſe, that receive leaſt; and inſulting in thoſe, that receive moſt: whatever 'tis, do not repine, but praiſe; how little ſoever it is, for its a free gift. Again, how much ſoever it is, be not high minded, but fear, boaſt not thy ſelf, but humbly bleſs thy Lord: *for if thou haſt received it, how canſt thou boaſt?*

2. Every man hath received ſome gift, no man all gifts, and this rightly conſidered, would keep all in a more

more even temper; as in nature, nothing altogether uſeleſs, ſo nothing ſelf ſufficient; this would keep the meaneſt from repining, and diſcontent, that have the loweſt rank in moſt reſpects: yet ſomething he hath received, that is not only a good to himſelf, but rightly improved, may be ſo to others likewiſe. And this will curb the loftineſs of the moſt advantaged, and teach them, not only to ſee ſome deficiences in themſelves, and ſome gifts ſtand lower in far meaner Perſons, which they want, but beſides the ſimple diſcovery of this, it will put them upon the uſe of what is in lower perſons, not only to ſtoop to the acknowledgment; but even withal the participation and benefit of it, not to trample upon all that is below them, but to take up, and uſe things uſeful, though lying at their feet; ſome Flowers and Herbs that grow very low, are of a very fragant ſmell, and healthful uſe.

Thou that carrieſt it ſo high, loſeſt much by it: many a poor Chriſtian that thou deſpiſeſt to make uſe of, may have that in them that might be very uſeful for thee; thou overlookeſt it, and treadeſt on it. St. *Paul* acknowledgeth he was comforted by the coming of *Titus*, though far inferiour to him; ſometimes a very mean unlettered Chriſtian may ſpeak more profitably and comfortably, even to a knowing learned man, than multitudes of his own beſt thoughts can do; eſpecially in a time of weakneſs and darkneſs.

3. As all is received, and with that difference, ſo the third thing is, that all is received, *to miniſter to each other*, and mutual benefit is the true uſe of all, ſuiting the mind of him that diſpenſes all, and the way of his diſpenſation. Thou art not proprietary Lord of any thing thou haſt, but οἰκόνομος, *a Steward*, and therefore oughteſt gladly

gladly to be a good Steward, that is, both faithful and prudent in thy intruſted gifts, uſing all thou haſt to the good of the Houſhold, and ſo to the advantage of thy Lord and Maſter. Haſt thou abilities of eſtate, or body, or mind, let all be thus employed? thinkeſt thou that thy wealth, or power, or wit, is thine, to do with them as thou wilt, to ingroſs to thy ſelf, either to retain uſeleſs, or to uſe to hoord and wrap up, or to laviſh out according as thy humour leads thee? no, all is given, as to a Steward, wiſely and faithfully to lay up and lay out, not only thy outward and common mind gifts, but even ſaving grace, that ſeems moſt intereſted and appropriated for thy private good: yet is not wholly for that, even thy graces are for the good of thy Brethren.

Oh! That we would conſider this in all, and look back and mourn on the fruitleſsneſs of, all that hath been in our hand all our life hitherto. If not wholly fruitleſs, yet far ſhort of that fruit we might have brought forth; any little thing done by us, looks big in our eye, we view it in a multiplying glaſs; but who may not complain that their means, and health, and opportunities of ſeveral kinds of doing for God, and for our Brethren, have lain dead upon their hands in a great part. Chriſtians, as defective in other duties of love, ſo moſt in that moſt important, of advancing the ſpiritual good of each other. Even they that have grace, do not duly uſe it to mutual edification. I deſire none to leap over the bounds of their calling, or rules of Chriſtian prudence in their converſe, yea, this were much to be blam'd, but, I fear, leſt unwary hands, throwing on water to quench that evil, let ſome of it fall by upon theſe ſparkles, that ſhould be ſtirr'd and blown up.

Neither ſhould the diſproportion of Gifts and Graces hinder, nor move the weaker to envy the ſtronger; nor the ſtronger to deſpiſe the weaker; but each in his place to be ſerviceable to another, as the Apoſtle excellently preſſes it by that moſt fit reſemblance of the parts of the body, 1 *Cor.* 12 *As the foot ſays not, why am I not the eye, or the head; the head cannot ſay of the foot I have no need of thee.* No envy, no deſpiſing in the natural; Oh! the pity that ſo much ſhould be in the myſtical; were we more ſpiritual, this would leſs be found. In the mean time, Oh! that we were more agreeable to that happy eſtate we look for, in our preſent aſpect, and carriage one to another. Though all graces are in ſome meaſure where there is one, yet all not in a like meaſure. One Chriſtian more eminent in meekneſs, another in humility, a third in zeal, *&c.* Now by their ſpiritual converſe one with another each may be a gainer; and many ways may a private Chriſtian promote the good of others, with whom he lives, by ſeaſonable admonitions, and advice, and reproof ſweetned with meekneſs; but moſt by holy example, which is the moſt lively, and moſt effectual ſpeech.

Thou that haſt greater Gifts, more is entruſted in thy hand, therefore the more engagement to fidelity and diligence. Men in great place and publick ſervices to ſtir themſelves up by this thought to ſingular watchfulneſs, and Zeal; and in private converſe on with another, to be doing, and receiving ſpiritual good: are we not ſtrangers here, and is it not ſtrange, that we ſo often meet, and part without a word of our home, or the way to it, or our advance towards it? Chriſtians ſhould be trading one with another in ſpiritual things, and he ſure that faithfully uſes moſt, receives moſt, that's under that word; *to him that hath ſhall be given,*

and

and from him that hath not, &c. that uſes not. Its he that hath actively and uſefully. Merchants can feel in their trading a dead time, and complain ſeriouſly of it, and Chriſtians in theirs either can ſuffer it and not ſee it, or ſee it and not complain, or poſſibly complain and yet not be deeply ſenſible of it.

Certainly it cannot be duly regreted that we are ſo fruitleſs in the Lords work in this kind, that alone we ſtudy it not more, and ſeek it more by prayer, to know the true uſe of all we receive, and in ſociety to endeavour accordingly. But we triffle out our time, and inſtead of the commerſe of grace to our mutual enriching, we trade in vanity, and as it were Children exchanging ſhells and toys together.

This ſure will lie heavy when we reflect on it, and ſhall come near the utter brink of time, looking forwards on eternity, and then looking back to our days, ſo vainly waſted and worn out to no purpoſe. Oh! let us awake, awake our ſelves and one another, to more fruitfulneſs and faithfulneſs, whatſoever be our received meaſure, leſs or more.

Be not diſcouraged, to have little in the account ſhall be no prejudice. The approbation runs not, *thou hadſt much*, but in the contrary, *thou haſt been faithful in little*: great faithfulneſs in the uſe of ſmall gifts hath great acceptance, and a great and ſure reward. Great receits engage to greater returns, and therefore require the greater diligence; and that not only for the increaſe of grace within; but the aſſiſtance of it in others. Retired Contemplation may be more pleaſing, but due activeneſs for God and his Church is more profitable. *Rachel*, was fair, but ſhe was barren, *Leah* blear eyed, but fruitful.

Verſe 11.

11. *If any Man ſpeak, let him ſpeak as the Oracles of God, if any Man miniſter let him do it as of the ability which God giveth: that God in all things may be glorify'd, through Jeſus Chriſt, to whom be praiſe and dominion for ever and ever Amen.*

EVery part of the body of Chriſt, as it partakes life with the reſt, it imparts ſervice to the reſt, but there be ſome more eminent, and as I may ſay, *organick* parts of this body, and theſe are more eminently uſeful to the whole body. Therefore the Apoſtle having enlarg'd himſelf into a general precept, adds a word in ſpecial to theſe ſpecial parts, the Preachers of the Word, and (which here I conceive is meant by Deacons or Miniſters) the other aſſiſtent Officers of the Church of God.

Theſe are coordained by Jeſus Chriſt, as Lord of his own houſe to be ſerviceable to him in it, he fits and ſanctifies for this great work, all that are called unto it by himſelf. And they are directed for the acquitting of their great Work. (1.) By a clear rule of the due manner. (2.) The main end of it.

Particular rules for the preaching of the Word may be many, but this is one moſt comprehenſive, that the Apoſtle gives, *if any ſpeak, let him ſpeak as the Oracles of God. If any ſpeak*, that is clear from the rule what ſpeakirg is regulated, and for brevity once expreſt. If any ſpeak the Oracles of God, let

let him ſpeak them like themſelves, *as the Oracles of God.*

It is a chief thing in all ſerious actions to take the nature of them aright, for this mainly regulates them, and directs in their performance. And this eſpecially would be regarded in thoſe things, that are of higheſt worth, and greateſt weight in ſpiritual imployments, wherein it is moſt dangerous, and yet with us moſt ordinary, to miſtake and miſcarry. Were prayer conſidered, as preſence and ſpeech with the great God, the King of Glory, Oh! how would this mould the mind? what a watchful, holy, and humble deportment would it teach? ſo that truly all directions for prayer might be ſummed up after this ſame model in this one, if any Man pray, let him ſpeak as ſpeaking with God, juſt as here for preaching, if any Man ſpeak in that way let him do it as ſpeaking from God, that is, *as the Oracles of God.* Under this all the due qualifications of this holy work are compriſed; I ſhall name but theſe three which are prime, and others may be eaſily reduced to theſe. 1. *Faithfully.* 2. *Holily.* 3. *Wiſely*

In the firſt its ſuppoſed that a Man have competent inſight and Knowledge in theſe Divine Oracles, that firſt he learn before he teach, which many of us do not, though we paſs through the Schools and Claſſes, and through the books too, wherein theſe things are taught, and bring with us ſome proviſion, ſuch as may be had there. He that would faithfully teach of God muſt be taught of God, be God-learned and this will help to all the reſt, to be faithful in delivering the meſſage, as he receives it, not detracting or adding, nor altering; and as in ſetting forth that in general truths, ſo in the particular ſetting them home, declaring to his people their ſins, and his judgements following ſin, eſpecially in his own people.

2. *Holily*

2. *Holily.* With that high eſteem, that reverence of the great majeſty, whoſe meſſage he carries, and the Divinneſs of the Meſſage it ſelf, thoſe deep myſteries that no created Spirits are able to fathom. Oh! this would make us tremble in the diſpenſing of theſe Oracles, conſidering our impurities, and weakneſſes, and unſpeakable diſproportion, to ſo high a task. He had reaſon that ſaid *I am ſeiz'd with amazement and horrour, as often as I begin to ſpeak of God.* And with this humble reverence, is to joyn ardent love to our Lord, to his truth, to his glory, and his peoples Souls. Theſe holy affections ſtand oppoſite to our blind boldneſs in ruſhing on this ſublime exerciſe, as a common work, our dead coldneſs in ſpeaking things, that our hearts are not warm'd with, and ſo no wonder what we ſay doth ſeldom reach further than the ear, or at furtheſt than the underſtanding, and memory of our hearers; There is a correſpondence, it is the heart ſpeaks to the heart; and the underſtanding and memory the ſame; and the tongue ſpeaks, but to the ear: further this holy temper ſhuts out all private paſſion in delivering Divine Truths; it is high prophaning of his name, and holy things, to make them ſpeak our private pleas and quarrels, yea to reprove ſin after this manner is a heinous ſin, to fly out into invectives that though not expreſt ſo, yet are aimed as blows of ſelf revenge for injuries done to us, or fancied by us; this is to wind and draw the Holy Word of God to ſerve our unholy diſtempers, and make it ſpeak not his meaning, but our own, ſure this is not to ſpeak *as the Oracles of God*, but baſely to abuſe the Word, as impoſtors in Religion of old did their Images, ſpeaking behind them, and through them, what might make for their advantage. True, that the Word is to be particularly applyed, to reprove moſt the particular

ticular ſins, that moſt abound amongſt a people: but this to be done, not in anger, but in love.

3. *Wiſely*. By this I mean in the way of delivering it, that it be done gravely and decently; that light expreſſions, and affected flouriſhes, and unſeemly geſtures, be avoided; and that there be a ſweet contemperature of authority and mildneſs? But *who is ſufficient for theſe things.*

Now you that hear would certainly meet and ſuit in this too. If any hear, let him hear *as the Oracles of God*, not as a well tuned ſound, to help you to ſleep an hour, not as a humane Speech or Oration, to diſpleaſe, or pleaſe you an hour, according to the ſuiting of its ſtrain, and your palate: Not as a School leſſon, to add ſomewhat to your ſtock of Knowledge, to tell you ſomewhat you knew not before, or as a feaſt of new notions. Thus the moſt reliſh a preacher, while till they try his gift, and its new with them, but a little time diſguſts them. But hear *as the Oracles of God*, the diſcovery of ſin, and death lying on us, and the diſcovery of a Saviour, that takes theſe off; the ſweet word of reconciliation, God wooing Man; the great King intreating for peace with a company of rebels, not that are too ſtrong for him, Oh! no, but on the contrary he could utterly deſtroy in one moment. Theſe are the things brought you in this word: Therefore come to it with ſutable reverence, with ardent deſires, and hearts open, to receive it, *with meekneſs as the engrafted word, that is able to ſave your Souls*: it were well worth one days pains of ſpeaking and hearing, that we could learn ſomewhat, at leaſt how to ſpeak, and hear henceforward; to ſpeak and hear *as the Oracles of God.*

The other of *miniſtring as of the ability that God giveth*:

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In this. (1.) Ability, and that received from God, for other there is none for any good work, leaſt for the peculiar miniſtration of his ſpiritual affairs in this Houſe. (2.) The uſing of this ability received from him for them.

And this truly is a chief thing for Miniſters and for each Chriſtian, ſtill to depend on the influence and ſtrength of God, to do all his works in that ſtrength; the humbleſt Chriſtian how weak ſoever is the ſtrongeſt. There is a natural wretched-independency in us, that we would be the Authors of our own works, and do all without him; without whom indeed we can do nothing. Learn we to go more out of our ſelves, and we ſhall find more ſtrength for our duties, and againſt our tentations: Faith's great work is, to renounce ſelf power, and to bring in the power of God to be ours. Happy they, that are weakeſt in themſelves, ſenſibly ſo. That word of the Apoſtle is theirs, they know what it means, though a riddle to the World, *when I am weak, then am I ſtrong.*

Now the end of all is, *that in all God may be glorify'd,* &c. All meet in this, if they move in their ſtraight line, here they concenter, not only theſe two ſorts ſpecify'd in this verſe, but all ſorts of perſons that uſe aright any gift of God as they are generally comprehended in the former verſe, for this end relates to all, as it is expreſt univerſally, *That in all,* in all perſons, and all things, the word bears both, and the thing it ſelf extends to both.

Here we have, like that of the heaven's, a circular motion of all ſanctified good; it comes forth from God, through Chriſt unto Chriſtians, and moving in them to the mutual good of each other, returns through Chriſt unto God again, and takes them along with it, in whom it was and had its motion. All

All perſons and things ſhall pay this tribute, even they that moſt wickedly ſeek to withhold it, but this the happineſs of the Saints, that they move willingly thus, are ſweetly drawn not forced or driven. They are gained to ſeek and deſire this, to ſet in with God in the intention of the ſame end, to have the ſame purpoſe with him, his Glory in all. And to proſecute his end by his direction, the means and ways he appoints them.

This is his due, as God; and the declining from this, ſquinting from this view to ſelf ends, eſpecially in God's own peculiar work, is high treaſon; yet the baſe heart of Man leads naturally this way, to intend himſelf in all, to raiſe his own eſteem or advantage in ſome way.

And thus the heart is ſo ſubtle in conveying, that it will deceive the moſt diſcerning, if they be not conſtant in ſuſpecting and watching it. This the great task to overcome in this point. To have ſelf under our feet, and God only in our eye and purpoſe in all.

It is moſt reaſonable, his due, as God, the being of all, not only of all ſupervenient good, but even of being it ſelf, ſeeing all is from him, that all be for him, *Rom.* 11. *ult. For of him, and through him, and to him are all things: to whom be glory for ever Amen.*

As it is moſt juſt, ſo its moſt ſweet, to aim all at this, *that God be glorified*: the alone worthy and happy deſign that fills the heart with heavenlineſs and with a heavenly calmneſs, ſets it above the Clouds and Storms of theſe paſſions that diſquiet low-ſelf-ſeeking minds. He is a miſerable unſettled wretch that cleaves to himſelf and forgets God, is perplexed about his credit, and gain, and baſe ends, which are often broke; and when he attains, yet they and he ſhortly periſh together; when

his eſtate, or deſigns, or any comforts fail, how can he look to him, whom he look't ſo little at before? may not the Lord ſay; *Go to the gods whom thou haſt ſerv'd, and let them deliver, and comfort thee.* Seek comfort from thy ſelf, as thou didſt all for thy ſelf? What an appalement will this be? But he that hath reſigned himſelf, and is all for God, may ſay confidently, that the Lord is his portion. This is the Chriſtians aim, to have nothing in himſelf, nor in any thing, but in this tenure, all for the Glory of my God, my eſtate, family, abilities, my whole ſelf, all I have and am. And as the love of God grows in the heart, this purpoſe grows; the higher the flame riſes, the purer it is, the eye daily the more upon it, it is oftner in mind in all actions, than before, in common things, the very works of our callings, our very refreſhments to eat, and drink, and ſleep, are all for this end, and with a particular aim at it as much as may be, even the thought of it often renewed throughout the day, and at times generally applied to all our ways and employments. Its that *Elixir* that turns thy ordinary works into gold, into ſacrifices by touch of it.

Through Jeſus Chriſt.] The Chriſtian in Covenant with God receives all this way, and returns all this way, and he poſſeſſes and hath equal right with the Father to this glory, as he is equally the ſpring of it with him, as God: but its conveyed through him as Mediator, that obtains all grace we receive, and all glory we return, and all our praiſe, as our ſpiritual ſacrifice, is put into his hand, as our high Prieſt, to offer up for us, that they may be accepted.

Now the holy ardour of the Apoſtles affections, taken with the mention of this Glory of God, carries him to a *doxology*, as we term it, a rendring of glory in the mid-

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dle of his diſcourſe. Thus often we find in St. *Paul* likewiſe. Poor and ſhort liv'd the glory and grandeur of Men like themſelves, a ſhaddow, and nothing: but this ſolid and laſting, Supream it is, and abideth forever. And the Apoſtles full of Divine affections, and admiring nothing but God, do delight in this, and cannot contain from this at any time in their diſcourſe; it is always ſweet, and ſeaſonable, and they find it ſo. And thus are ſpiritual minds, a word of this nature falls on them as a ſparkle on ſome matter, that readily takes fire, they are ſtraight enflamed with it. But alas! to us how much is it otherwiſe, the mention of the praiſes and glory of our God is to our hearts as a ſparkle falling either into a puddle of water, and foul water too, or at leaſt as upon green timber, that much fire will not kindle: ſo much moiſture of our humours, and corruptions, that all dies out with us, and we remain cold and dead.

But were not this a high and bleſſed condition to be in all eſtates in ſome willing readineſs to bear a part in this ſong, to acknowledge the greatneſs and goodneſs of our God, and to wiſh him glory in all? What are the Angels doing? this is their buſineſs, and that endleſs: and ſeeing we hope to partake, we would even here, though in a lower key, and not ſo tunebly neither, yet as we may, begin it; and upon all occaſions our hearts be often following in this ſweet Note, or offering at it. *To him be Glory, and Dominion for ever.*

Verſes 12, 13,

12. *Beloved, think it not ſtrange concerning the fiery tryal, which is to try you; as though ſome ſtrange thing hapned unto you:*

13. *But rejoyce, in as much as you are partakers of Chriſt's ſufferings; that when his Glory ſhall be revealed, ye may be glad alſo with exceeding joy.*

THis fighting life, when we conſider it aright, ſure we need not be deſired not to love it, but have need to be ſtrengthned with patience to go through, and to fight on with courage and aſſurance of victory, ſtill combating in a higher ſtrength than our own, againſt ſin within, and troubles without. This is the great Scope of this Epiſtle, and the Apoſtle often interchanges his advices, and comforts in reference to theſe two. Againſt ſin he inſtructs us in the beginning of this Chapter, and here again, againſt ſuffering, and both in a like way; and us to be armed, armed with *the ſame mind*, that was in Chriſt, againſt trouble here, after the ſame manner: in the mortifying of ſin, we ſuffer with him, as there he teaches, *verſe* 1. of this *Chapter*; in the encountring of affliction we ſuffer with him, as here we have it, and ſo the ſame mind in the ſame ſufferings, will bring us to the ſame iſſue. *Beloved, think it not ſtrange concerning the fiery trial, which is to try you*, &c. *But rejoyce in as much as ye are partakers of Chriſt's ſufferings; that when his glory ſhall be revealed, ye likewiſe may be glad with exceeding joy.* The

The words to the end of the chapter contain grounds of encouragement, and conſolation for the Children of God in ſufferings, eſpecially in ſuffering for God.

Theſe two verſes have theſe two things. (1.) The cloſs conjuncture of ſufferings with the eſtate of a Chriſtian. (2.) The due compoſure of a Chriſtian towards ſuffering.

1. Its no new, and therefore no ſtrange thing, that ſufferings, hot ſufferings, fiery ones, be the Companions of Religion, beſides the common miſeries of humane life; there is an acceſſion of troubles and hatreds for that holineſs of life, to which the Children of God are called.

It was the Lot of the Church from her wicked Neighbours, and in the Church, the lot of the moſt holy and peculiar Servants of God from the prophane multitude. *Woe's me, my Mother,* (ſays *Jeremy*) *thou haſt born me a Man of contentions.* And of all the Prophets, ſays not our Saviour handling this ſame argument in his Sermon; *So perſecuted they the prophets that were before? you* and after tells them what they might look for, *Behold,* ſays he, *I ſend you forth as ſheep in the midſt of Wolves.* And generally no following of Chriſt, but with his badge and burden, ſomthing to be left, our ſelves left; *whoſoever will be my diſciple let him deny himſelf*; and what to take; *take up his Croſs and follow me.* And doth not the Apoſtle give his Schollars this univerſal leſſon, as an infallible truth, *all that will live Godly in Chriſt Jeſus ſhall ſuffer perſecution*; and look in the cloſe of that roll of Believers conquering in ſuffering, what a cluſter of ſufferings and torture, you have *Heb.* 11. *ver.* 36, 37. &c. Thus in the Primitive times the tryal and fiery tryal, even literally ſo, continued long: theſe wicked Emperours hating the very innocency

nocency of Chriſtians; and the people though they knew their blameleſs carriage, yet, when any evil came, would pick this quarrel and ſtill cry, *Chriſtianos ad Leones*

Now this, if we look to inferiour cauſes, is not ſtrange, the malignant ungodly World hating holineſs, the light, yea the very ſhadow of it, and the more the Children of God walk like their Father, and their home, the more unlike muſt they of neceſſity become to the World about them; and therefore become the very mark of all their enmities and malice.

And thus indeed the Godly, though the *Sons of peace*, are the improper cauſes, the occaſion of much noiſe and diſturbance in the World, as their Lord the *Prince of peace* avows it openly of himſelf in that ſenſe, *I came not to ſend peace, but a ſword, to ſet a Man at variance with his Father, and the Daughter againſt the Mother*, &c. If a Son in a Family begin to enquire after God, and withdraw from their prophane, or dead way, Oh! what a clamour riſes preſently, Oh! my Son or Daughter, or Wife, is become a plain fool, &c. And then all done, that may be, to quel and vex them, and make their life grievous to them.

The exact holy walking of a Chriſtian condemns really the World about him, ſhews the diſorder and foulneſs of their prophane ways; and the Life of Religion ſet beſide dead formality, diſcovers it to be but a carcaſe and lifeleſs appearance; and for this neither groſly wicked, civil, nor formal perſons can well digeſt it. There is in the life of a Chriſtian a convincing light, that ſhews the deformity of the works of darkneſs, and a piercing heat, that ſcorches the ungodly, which ſtirs and troubles their conſciences, and this they cannot endure, and hence riſes in them a contrary fire

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of wicked hatred, and hence the trials, the fiery trials of the godly. If they could get thoſe preciſe perſons removed out of their way think they, then they might have more room and live at more liberty, as 'tis *Revel.* 11. 10. a *caroufing* [χαῖρον] What a dance there about the dead bodies of the two witneſſes; *the people and nations rejoyced and made merry, and ſend gifts one to another, becauſe theſe two prophets tormented them that dwelt on the earth.* And from the ſame hearth, I mean the ſame wickedneſs of heart in the World, are the fires of perſecution kindled againſt the Saints in the World, and the bonefires of joy when they are rid of them.

And as this is an infernal fire of enmity againſt God, tis blown by that Spirit whoſe Element it is: Satan ſtirs up and blows the coal, and raiſes the hatred of the ungodly againſt Chriſtians.

But while he and they, in whom he powerfully works, are thus working for their vile ends in the perſecutions of the Saints; he that ſoveraignly orders all is working in the ſame, his wiſe and gracious ends, and attains them, and makes the malice of his enemies ſerve his ends, and undo their own. It is true that by the heat of perſecution, many are ſcar'd from embracing it, ſuch as love themſelves and their preſent eaſe; and others that ſeem'd to have embrac't it, are driven to let it go and fall from it, but yet all well computed Religion is ſtill upon the gaining hand, thoſe that reject it or revolt from it, are ſuch as have no true Knowledge, of it, nor ſhare in it, nor in that happineſs in which it ends; but they, that are indeed united to Jeſus Chriſt, do cleave the cloſer to him, and ſeek to have their hearts more faſtened, becauſe of theſe trials, that they are, or likely may be put to. And in their victorious patience appears the invincible power of Religion

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where it hath once gained the heart, that it cannot be beaten, nor burnt out, it ſelf is a fire more mighty than all fires kindled againſt it. The love of Chriſt conquers and triumphs in the hardeſt ſufferings of life, and in death it ſelf.

And this hath been the means of kindling it in other hearts, that were ſtrangers to it, when they beheld the victorious patience of the Saints, who conquer'd dying, as their head did, that wearied their tormenters, and triumpht over their cruelty by a conſtancy far above it.

Thus theſe fiery trials, made the luſtre of faith appear moſt, as gold ſhines brighteſt in the furnace, and if any droſs is mixt with it, its refined and purged from it by theſe trials, and ſo it remains by the fire purer than before. And both theſe are in the reſemblance here intended, that the fire of ſufferings is the advantage of Believers, both trying the excellency of faith, giving evidence of it, what it is; purifying it from earth and droſſie mixtures, and making it more excellently what it is, raiſing it to a higher pitch of refinedneſs, and worth. In theſe fires, as faith is tryed, the word on which faith relies, is tried and is found all gold, moſt precious, no refuſe in it, the truth and ſweeetneſs of the promiſes much confirmed in the Chriſtians heart, upon his experiment of them in his ſufferings; his God as good as his word, being with him when he goes through the fire, preſerving him that he loſes nothing except droſs, which is a gainful loſs, leaves of his corruption behind him.

Oh! how much worth is it, and how doth it endear the heart to God, to have found him ſenſibly preſent in the times of trouble, him refreſhing the Soul with dews of ſpiritual comfort in the midſt of the flames of fiery trial.

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One ſpecial advantage of theſe fires, is the purging of a Chriſtians heart from the love of the World, and preſent things; its true, at beſt it is baſe and deſpicable, in reſpect of the high eſtate and hopes of a Believer, yet ſtill there is ſomewhat within him, that would bend him downwards and draw him to too much complacency in outward things, if they were much to his mind: too kind uſage might ſometimes make him forget himſelf, and think himſelf at home, at leaſt ſo much, as not to entertain thoſe longings after home, and that ardent progreſs homewards, that became him; It is good for us certainly to find hardſhip, and enmities, and contempts here, and to find them frequent, that we may not think them ſtrange, but our ſelves ſtrangers, and think it were ſtrange for us to be otherwiſe entertained. This keeps the affections more clear and diſingaged, ſets it upward. Thus the Lord makes the World diſpleaſing to his own, that they may turn in to him, and ſeek all their conſolations in himſelf; Oh! unſpeakable advantage.

2. *The compoſure of a Chriſtian in reference to ſufferings*, is preſcrib'd in theſe two following, *Reſolving* and *Rejoycing*. (1.) Reſolving for them, reckoning ſo, *think it not ſtrange*, μὴ ξενίζεσθε, (2.) Rejoycing in them, χαίρετε, *Be glad in as much*, &c.

Be not ſtrangers in it.] Which yet naturally we would be, are willing to hear of peace and eaſe, and would gladly believe what we extreamly deſire. It is a thing of prime concern to take at firſt a right notion of Chriſtianity which many do not, and ſo either fall off quickly, or walk on ſlowly and heavily, do not reckon right the charges, take not the duties of doing and ſuffering; but think to perform ſome duties, if they may with eaſe, and have no other foreſight; do not

conſider that ſelf denial, that fighting againſt a Mans ſelf, and vehemently with the World, theſe trials, fiery trials, which a Chriſtian muſt encounter with. As they obſerve of other points, Popery in this, is very compliant with nature, which is a very bad ſign in religion; we would be content it were true, that the true Church of Chriſt had rather Proſperity and Pomp for her badge than the Croſs, much eaſe and riches, and few or no croſſes, except they were painted and guilded croſſes, ſuch as that Church hath choſen inſtead of real ones.

Moſt Men would give religion a fair countenance, if it gave them fair weather, and they that do indeed acknowledge Chriſt the Son of God, as St. *Peter* did, *Matt.* 16. Yet are naturally as unwilling, as he was, to hear the hard news of ſuffering; and if their advice might have place would readily be of his mind, *Be it far from thee Lord.* His good confeſſion was not, but this kind advice was from fleſh and blood, and from an evil Spirit, as the ſharp anſwer tells; *get thee behind me Satan, thou art an offence unto me.*

You know what kind of Meſſiah the Jews generally dreamt of, and therefore took ſcandal at the meanneſs and ſufferings of Chriſt, expecting an earthly King of him, and an outward flouriſhing State; and the Diſciples themſelves, after they had been long with him, were ſtill in that ſame dream, when they were conteſting about imaginary places; yea they were ſcarce well out of it, even after his ſuffering and death; all the noiſe and trouble of that had not well awakt them, *Luk.* 24. *we truſted it had been he, which ſhould have reſtored Iſrael.*

And after all that we have read, and heard of antient times

times, and of Jeſus Chriſt himſelf, his ſufferings in the fleſh, and of his Apoſtles and his Saints from one Age to another, yet ſtill we have our inclinations to this, of driving troubles far off from our thoughts, till they come upon our backs, and fancying nothing, but reſt and eaſe, till we be ſhaken rudely out of it.

How have we of late flatter'd our ſelves, many of us one year after another, upon ſlight appearances. Oh! now it will be peace, and behold ſtill trouble hath increaſed, and theſe thoughts proved the lying viſions of our own hearts, while the Lord hath not ſpoken it. And thus of late, have we thought it at hand. And taken ways of our own to haſten it; that I fear will prove fools haſt, as you ſay.

You that know the Lord ſeek him earneſtly for the averting of further troubles and combuſtions; which if you look aright, you will find threaten us as much as ever. And withal ſeek hearts prepar'd, and fixed for days of trial, fiery trial, yea though we did obtain ſome breathing of our outward peace, yet ſhall not the followers of Chriſt want their trials from the hatred of the ungodly World, *if it perſecuted me* (ſays he,) *it will alſo perſecute you.*

Acquaint therefore your thoughts and hearts with ſufferings, that when they come, thou and they not being ſtrangers, may agree and comply the better. Do not afflict your ſelves with vain fears before hand, of troubles to come, and ſo make uncertain evils a certain vexation by advance. But thus, fore think the hardeſt things you may readily be put to, for the name and cauſe of Chriſt, and labour for a holy ſtability of mind for encountering it, if it ſhould come upon you: things certainly fall the lighter on us, when they fall firſt upon our thoughts. This way indeed of an imagined ſuffer-

ing, the conqueſt before hand may be but imaginary, and fail in the trial: therefore be ſtill humble, and dependent on the ſtrength of Chriſt, and ſeek to be prefurniſht with much diſtruſt of thy ſelf, and much truſt in him, with much denial of thy ſelf, and love to him. And thus the preparing and training of the heart may prove uſeful, and make it more dexterous, when brought to conflicting: in all, both before hand, and in time of the trial, make thy Lord Jeſus all thy ſtrength; That is our only way in all, *to be conquerours, to be more than conquerors, through him that loved us*

Think it not ſtrnge, for it is not; ſute your thoughts to the experience, and verdict of all times, and to the warnings that the Spirit of God in the Scriptures, and our Saviour himſelf hath given us from his own mouth, and example ſhewed in his own perſon. But the other point goes higher, *rejoyce*, though we think not the ſufferings ſtrange, yet may we not well think that rule ſomewhat ſtrange, to rejoyce in them? No, it will be found as reaſonable as the other, being duly conſidered. And upon the ſame ground 'twil bear both, *in as much as you are partakers of the ſufferings of Chriſt.*

If the Children of God conſider not their trials in their natural bitterneſs, but in the ſweet love from whence they ſpring, and the ſweet fruits that ſpring from them, that we are our Lords gold, and he tries us in the furnace to purifie us (as in the former verſe;) this may beget not only patience, but gladneſs even in the ſufferings. But add we this, and truly it compleats the reaſon of this way in our ſaddeſt ſufferings, that *in them we are partakers of the ſufferings of Chriſt.*

So

So then 1. Conſider this twofold connexed participance of the Sufferings of Chriſt, and of the after Glory. 2. The preſent joy even in ſufferings ſpringing from that participance,

I need not tell you, that this Communion in ſufferings is not in point of expiation, or ſatisfaction to Divine Juſtice, which was the peculiar end of the ſufferings of Chriſt *perſonal*, not of the common ſufferings of Chriſt *myſtical*, he bare our ſin on his own body on the Tree, and in bearing them, took them away; we bear his ſufferings, as his body united to him by his Spirit. Thoſe ſufferings that were his perſonal burden, we partake the ſweet fruits of, they are accounted ours, and we acquitted by them, but the endurance of them was his high and incommunicable task, in which none at all were with him, our Communion in theſe, as fully compleated by himſelf in his natural body, is the ground of our comfort, and joy in theſe ſufferings that are compleated in his myſtical body, the Church.

This is indeed our joy, that we have ſo light a burden, ſo ſweet an exchange, the weight of ſin quite taken off our backs, and only all bound on his croſs, and our croſſes badges of our conformity, laid on our ſhoulders, and the great weight of them likewiſe held up by his hand, that they overpreſs us not. Theſe fires of our trial may be corrective, and purgative of the remaining power of ſin, and they are ſo intended; but Jeſus Chriſt alone in the ſufferings of his own Croſs, was the burnt offering, *the propitiation for our ſins.*

Now although he hath perfectly ſatisfied for us and ſaved us by his ſufferings; yet this conformity with him in way of ſuffering, is moſt reaſonable. As our holineſs doth not ſtand in point of law, nor come in at all

all in the matter of juſtifying us, yet we are called and appointed to holineſs in Chriſt, as ſuiting us with him our glorious head, and we do really receive it from him, that we may be like him, ſo theſe our ſufferings bear a very congruous likeneſs with him; though no way as acceſſion to his in expiation, yet as a part of his: and therefore the Apoſtle ſays, even in this reſpect, that we are *predeſtinate to be conformed to the Image of his Son*; were it fit that we ſhould not follow, where our Captain led, and went firſt, but that he ſhould lead through ragged thorny ways, and we paſs about to get away through flow'ry meadows: as his natural body ſhared with his head in his ſufferings, ſo ought his myſtical with him, as its head. The buffetings and ſpitings on his face, and thorny crown on his head, a pierced ſide, nailed hands and feet, and if we be parts of him, think we that a body finding nothing but eaſe and bathing in delights were agreeable to a head ſo tormented. I remember what that pious *Duke* ſaid at *Jeruſalem* when they offer'd to crown him King there; *No Crown of Gold, where Chriſt Jeſus was Crowned with thorns.*

[*Nolo auream, ubi Chriſtus ſpineam*]

This is the way we muſt follow, or elſe reſolve to leave him; the way of the Croſs is the royal way to the Crown. He ſaid it, and remembred them of it again, that they might take the deep impreſſion of it, *remember what I ſaid unto you, the Servant is not greater than the Lord: if they have perſecuted me, they will alſo perſecute you: if they have kept my ſaying, they will keep yours alſo.* And particularly in point of reproaches; *if they called the Maſter*, Beelzebub, *how much more ſhall they call them of his houſhold?* a bitter ſcoff, an evil name, reproaches for Chriſt, why doth this fret thee, its a part of thy Lords entertainment while he was here, thou art even

Joh. 15. 20.

Mat. 10. 24.

in

in this a partaker of his ſufferings, and in this way is he bringing thee foreward to the partaking of his Glory: That is the other thing, *when his Glory ſhall be revealed.*

Now he is hid, little of his Glory ſeen; it was hid while he was on earth, and now 'tis hid up in Heaven, where he is, and for his body here, his Church, no pompous dreſs, nor outward ſplendour; and the particular parts of it, the Saints, poor deſpiſed creatures, the very refuſe of Men in outward reſpects and common eſteem, ſo he himſelf is not ſeen, and his followers, the more they are ſeen and lookt on by the Worlds eye, the more meanneſs appears; true, that as in the days of humiliation ſome rays were breaking forth through the vail of his fleſh, and cloud of his low deſpiſeable condition; thus is it with his followers ſometimes a glance of his Image ſtrikes the very eye of the World, and forces ſome acknowledgment and a kind of reverence in the ungodly: But commonly Chriſt and his followers are covered with all the diſgraces and ignominies the World can put on them. But there is a day wherein he will appear, and 'tis at hand; and then *he ſhall be glorious* even *in his* deſpiſed *Saints*, and *admired in them that believe*: how much more in the matchleſs brightneſs of his own glorious perſon.

In the mean time he is hid, and they hid in him; *our life is hid with Chriſt in God.* The World ſees here nothing of his Glory and beauty, and his own not much, have but a little glimmering of him, and their own happineſs in him: know little of their own high condition, and what they are born to. But in that bright day he ſhall ſhine forth in his royal dignity, and all eyes ſhall ſee him, and be overcome with his ſplendour, terrible ſhall it be to thoſe that formerly deſpiſed him,

and

and his Saints: but to them the gladeſt day that ever aroſe upon them, and that ſhall never ſet or be benighted. The day they ſo much longed and lookt out for, the full accompliſhment of all their hopes and deſires. Oh! how dark were all our days without the hope of this day.

Then ſays the Apoſtle, *ye ſhall rejoyce with* exceeding *joy*, and to the end you may not fall ſhort of that Joy in the participance of Glory, fall not back from a cheerful progreſs in the Communion of theſe ſufferings, that are ſo cloſe linked with it, and will ſo ſure lead unto it and end it. For in this the Apoſtles expreſſion; this Glory and Joy is ſet before them as the great matter of their deſires, and hopes, and the certain end of their preſent ſufferings.

Now upon theſe grounds the motion will appear reaſonable, and not too great a demand, *to rejoyce even in the ſufferings.*

It is true that paſſage in the Epiſtle to the *Heb.* oppoſes preſent Affliction to Joy. But 1. If you mark, it is but in the appearance or outward viſage, *it ſeemeth not to be matter of joy but of grief* To look to it, it hath not a ſmiling countenance, yet joy may be under it.

(2.) And though to the fleſh, it is, what it ſeems, grief, and not joy, yet there may be under it ſpiritual joy, yea the affliction it ſelf may help and advance that joy. (3.) Through the natural ſenſe of it there will be ſome allay or mixture of grief, ſo that the joy cannot be pure and compleat, but yet there may be joy even in it. Thus the Apoſtle here clearly gives, rejoyce now in ſuffering that you may rejoyce exceedingly after it, ἀγαλλιώμενοι, *leaping for joy:* doubtles this joy at preſent is but a little parcel, a drop of that Sea of joy. Now

'tis

'tis joy, but more reſerved, then *they ſhall leap.* Yet In preſent rejoyce even in *trial,* yea in *fiery trial.* This may be; the Children of God are not called to ſo ſad a life as the World imagines, beſides what is laid up, they have even here their rejoycings and Songs in their diſtreſſes, as thoſe Priſoners had their Pſalms even at midnight after their ſtripes in their chains, before they knew of a ſudden deliverance, true there may be a darkneſs within, clouding all the matter of their joy; but even that darkneſs is the ſeed time of after joy, and light is ſown in that darkneſs, and ſhall ſpring up, and not only ſhall they have a rich crop at full harveſt, but even ſome firſt fruits of it here, in pledge of the harveſt.

And this they ought to expect, and ſeek after with humble ſubmiſſive minds, for the meaſure and time of it, that they may be partakers of ſpiritual joy, and may by it be enabled to go patiently, yea cheerfully through the tribulations and tentations that be in their way homeward; and for this, endeavour after a more clear diſcerning of their intereſt in Chriſt, that they may know they partake of him, and ſo in ſuffering, are partakers of his ſufferings, and ſhall be partakers of his Glory.

Many afflictions will not cloud and obſtruct this ſo much, as one ſin, therefore if ye would walk cheerfully be moſt careful to walk holily. All the winds about make not an earthquake, but that within.

Now this joy is grounded on this Communion. (1.) Sufferings; then 2. In Glory 1. In ſuffering even in themſelves, it is a ſweet joyful thing to be a ſharer with Chriſt in any thing, all enjoyments wherein he is not, are bitter to a Soul that loves him, and all ſufferings with him ſweet. The worſt things of Chriſt more

truly delightful, than the beſt things of the World, his afflictions ſweeter than their pleaſures, his reproaches more glorious than their honours, and more rich than their treaſures, as *Moſes* accompted them, *Heb.* 11. Love delights in likeneſs and Communion, not only in things otherwiſe pleaſant, but in the hardeſt and harſheſt things, that have not any thing in them deſireable but only that likeneſs; ſo that this is very ſweet to a heart poſſeſt with this love; what does the World in hatreds, and perſecutions, and revilings for Chriſt, but make me more like him, give me a greater ſhare with him, in that which he did ſo willingly undergo for me. *When he was ſought to be a King,* Bern. *he eſcaped; but when he was ſought to the Croſs, he freely yielded himſelf.* And ſhall I ſhrink and creep back from what he calls me to for his ſake; yea even all my other troubles and ſufferings I will deſire to have ſtampt thus, with this conformity to the ſufferings of Chriſt, in the humble, obedient, cheerful endurance of them, and giving up my will to my fathers.

The following of Chriſt makes any way pleaſant, his faithful followers refuſe no march after him, be it through deſerts, and Mountains, and Storms, and hazards that will affright ſelf-pleaſing eaſie Spirits: hearts kindled and acted with the Spirit of Chriſt will follow him whereſoever he goeth.

As he ſpeaks it for warnings, *if they perſecuted me, they will perſecute you,* ſo he ſpeaks it for comforting them, and it is ſufficiently ſo, *if they hate you, they hated me before you.*

2. Then add the other, ſee whether it tends, *he ſhall be revealed in his Glory,* and ye ſhall be filled even over with joy in the partaking of that Glory. Therefore rejoyce now in the midſt of all your ſufferings;

ings; ſtand upon the advanced ground of the promiſes and covenant of grace, and by faith overlook this moment, and all that is in it, to that day wherein everlaſting joy ſhall be upon your heads, a Crown of it, and ſorrow and mourning ſhall flie away. believe this day, and the victory is won. Oh! that bleſſed hope well fixed and acted, would give other manner of Spirits; what zeal for God? what invincible courage againſt all encounters? How ſoon will this pageant of the World vaniſh, that Men are gazing on, theſe pictures and fancies of falſe ſtiled pleaſures, and honours, and give place to the real glory of the Sons of God, this bleſſed Son that is God appearing in full Majeſty, and all his Brethren in glory with him; all cloathed in their robes. And if you ask who are they? why *theſe are they that came out of great tribulation, and waſhed their robes in the blood of the Lamb.*

Verſes 14, 15, 16.

14. *If ye be reproached for the name of Chriſt happy are ye, for the Spirit of Glory and of God reſteth upon you, on their part he is evil ſpoken of, but on your part he is glorified.*

15. *But let none of you ſuffer as a murderer, or as a thief, or as an evil-doer, or as a buſie body in other Mens matters.*

16. *Yet if any Man ſuffer as a Chriſtian let him not be aſhamed, but let him glorifie God on this behalf.*

THE *Word* is the Chriſtians *magazine* both of inſtructions, and encouragements for *doing*, *or ſuffering*, and this Epiſtle is rich in both: here what the Apoſtle ſaid in ſuffering, he ſpecifies in particular, ſuffering of *reproaches*, but this ſeems not to come up to the height of that expreſſion he hath uſed; he ſpoke of *fiery trial*, but that of *reproach* ſeems rather fit to be called an airy trial, the blaſt of vaniſhing words. Yet upon trial, it will be found to be, as here it is accounted, a very ſharp, *a fiery trial*, firſt then of this particular kind of ſuffering. 2. Of the comfort and advice furniſht againſt it.

If we conſider both the nature of the thing, and the ſtrain of the Scriptures we will find, that reproache,

ches, are amongſt the ſharpeſt ſort of ſufferings, and are indeed *fiery trials, the tongue is a fire,* ſays St. *James*, and reproaches are the flaſhes of that fire, they are a a ſubtile kind of flame, like that lightening, that they ſay cruſheth the bones, and yet breaks not the fleſh, they wound not the body, as tortures and whips: but through a whole skin, they reach the ſpirit of a Man, and cut it. ſo *Pſal.* 42. 10. The fire of reproaches preys upon, and dryes up the *precious oyntment* of a good name, as *Solomon* compares it. A good name is in it ſelf a good, a prime outward good, and take us according to our natural temper and apprehenſions (according to which we feel things) moſt Men are, and ſome more exceſſively, too tender and delicate in it. Although truly I take this rather to be a weakneſs than true greatneſs of ſpirit, as they fancy it, to depend much on the opinion of others, and feel it deep, yet I ſay, conſidering it to be commonly thus with Men, and the remains of this, as other frailties in the Children of God, it cannot well be, but reproaches will ordinarily much afflict Men, and to ſome kind of Spirits poſſibly, be more grievous than ſome bodily pain or ſuffering.

And as they are thus, the Scripture accounts them ſo, and very uſually reckons them amongſt ſufferings, and readily names them more than any other kind of ſuffering, and that upon good reaſon, not only for their piercing nature (as its ſaid) but withal for their frequency, and multitude, and ſome things we ſuffer, do (as flies) more trouble by their number than by their weight.

Now there is no one kind of ſuffering of ſuch conſtancy, and commonneſs, and abundance as reproaches are. When other perſecutions ceaſe, yet thoſe continue when

when all other Martyr fires are put out, theſe burn ſtill; in all times and places the malignant World ready to revile Religion, not only avowed enemies of it, but the greateſt part even of thoſe that make a vulgar profeſſion of it, they that outwardly receive the form of Religion, yet are many of them inwardly haters of the power of it; and Chriſtians ſo called will ſcorn and reproach theſe that are ſo indeed.

And this is done with ſuch eaſe by every one, that theſe arrows fly thick; every one that hath a tongue can ſhoot them, even baſe *Abjects*, *Pſal.* 35. And the *drunkards make ſongs*, as *Jeremy* complains, the meaneſt ſort can reach this point of perſecution, and be active in it againſt the Children of God; they that cannot, or dare not offer them any other injury, will not fear, nor ſpare to let fly a taunt, or bitter word, ſo that whereas other ſufferings are rarer, theſe meet them daily, *Pſalm.* 42. 10. *While they ſay daily unto me where is thy God.*

We ſee how juſtly reproaches are often mentioned amongſt, and beyond other trials; and accounted perſecution, *Matth.* 5. 10, 11. *Bleſſed are ye when Men ſhall revile you, and perſecute you, and ſhall ſay all manner of evil againſt you falſly, for my ſake*, Gal. 4. 29. *But as then he that was born after the fleſh perſecuted him that was born after the Spirit, even ſo is it now.* And in the Hiſtory all we find is, he mockt him. And thus are they amongſt the ſufferings of Chriſt in the Goſpel, and not as the leaſt, the raylings and mockings darted at him, fixed to the croſs, more than the very nails that fixed him. And *Heb.* 12. 2. The *ſhame* of the croſs though he was above it and deſpiſed it, yet that ſhame of it, was much of the burden, ſo *ver.* 3. *Contradiction of ſinners.*

Now

Now the other thing is, that this is the lot of Christians, as it was of Christ, and why should they they look for more kindness, and better usage, and think to find acclamations, and applauses from the World, that so vilify'd their Lord. Oh no; The vain heart must be weaned from these to follow Christ, if we will indeed follow him; it must be framed to share with him in this point of suffering, not only mistakes and misconstructions, but bitter scoffings, and reproaches. Why should not our minds ply and fold to this upon that very reason, he so reasonably presses again and again, on his Disciples. *The servant is not greater than his master*, and in this very thing, *if they called the Master* Beelzebub, *how much more will they speak so of the servants.*

Inf. 1. Seeing its thus, I shall first press upon the followers of Christ, the Apostles rule here, to keep their sufferings spotless, that it may not be comfortless, resolve for it, but that it be innocent suffering; *suffer not as evil doers, ver.* 15. Besides that ways of wickedness are most unsuiting our holy calling, look to the enmity about you, and gain even out of that evil this great good, of the more circumspect and holy walking, know who you are, and where you are, your own weakness, and the Worlds wickedness. This our Saviour represents, and upon it gives that suitable rule; *Behold I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves, be ye therefore wise as Serpents, and harmless as Doves.* Know you not what exact eyes of others are upon you; will you not thence learn exactly to eye your selves, and all your ways, and seek of God with *David, to be led in righteousness, because of your enemies, your observers.* *Prudens simplicitas.*

This is the rule here *ver.* 16. *suffer as Christians* holily

holily, and blamelesly, that the enemy may not know where to fasten his hold; as the wrestlers anointed their bodies, that the hands of their party might not fasten thus truly they that walk, and suffer as Christians anointed with the Spirit of Christ, their enemies cannot well fasten hold.

I recommend therefore to you that love the Lord Jesus, this especially, to be careful, that all your reproaches may be indeed for Christ, and not for any thing in you unlike to Christ, that there be nothing save the matter of your rod; keep the quarrel as clean and unmixt as you can, and this will advantage you much both within, and without, in the peace and firmness of your minds, and in the refute of your enemies. This will make you as a brazen wall, as the Lord speaks to the Prophet, *they shall fight against you, but shall not prevail.*

Keep far off from all impure unholy ways; *suffer not as evil doers*, no nor *as busie bodies*, be much at home, setting things at rights within your own breast, where there is so much work, and such daily need of diligence, and then you will be vacant to unnecessary idle pryings into the wayes and affairs of others, and further then your calling and the rules of Christian charity engage you, you will not interpose in any matters without you, nor be found proud and censorious as they are ready to call you.

2. Shun the appearances of evil; walk warily and prudently in all things; be not heady nor self-will'd, no not in the best thing; walk not upon the utter brink and hedge of your liberty, for then you shall readily overpass it; things that are lawful may be inexpedient and in case our fear of scandal ought either to be wholly spared, or used with much prudence and circum-

spection

ſpection. Oh! ſtudy in all to adorn the Goſpel, and in ſenſe of your own unskillfullneſs and folly, beg wiſdom from above, *that annointing, that will teach you all things*, much of that *Holy Spirit, that will lead you in the way of all truth*; and then in that way, whatſoever be, ſuffer it, and however indignified and reproached, happy are you, for *the ſpirit of glory and of God reſteth upon you.*

Inf. 2. But if to be thus reproached be happy, then certainly their reproachers are no leſs unhappy, if on thoſe reſt *the ſpirit of glory and of God*; what Spirit in thoſe, but the Spirit of Satan, and of ſhame, and vileneſs. Who is the baſeſt, moſt contemptible kind of perſon in the world? truly, I think, an avowed contemner and mocker of holineſs. Shall any ſuch be found amongſt us?

I charge all you in this name of Chriſt, that you do not entertain godleſs prejudices againſt the people of God. Let not your ears be open to, nor your hearts cloſe with the calumnies and lies, that may be flying abroad of them and their practiſes, much leſs open your mouths againſt them, or let any diſgraceful word be heard from you: and when you meet with undeniable real frailties, know the law of love and practiſe it: Think this is blameworthy, yet let me not turn it to the reproach of thoſe perſons, who notwithſtanding may be ſincere, much leſs to the reproach of other perſons profeſſing Religion, and then caſt it upon Religion it ſelf.

My Brethren, beware of ſharing with the ungodly in this tongue perſecution of Chriſtians. There is a Day at hand wherein the Lord will make enquiry after thoſe things, if we ſhall be made accountable for *idle words* (as we are warned) how much more for bitter malicious words uttered againſt any, eſpecially

againſt the Saints of God, whom however the World reckon, he eſteems his precious ones, his treaſure. You that now can look on them with a ſcornful eye, which way ſhall you look when they ſhall be beautiful and glorious, and all the ungodly cloathed with ſhame? Oh! do not reproach them, but rather come in and ſhare with them in the way of holineſs, and in all the ſufferings and reproaches that follow it: for if you partake of their diſgraces with them, you ſhall ſhare of glory with them, in the Day of their Lords appearing.

The words have two things. The *evil* of theſe reproaches ſuppos'd, and the *good* expreſt. The *evil* ſuppos'd, that they are trials and hot trials: of this already. The *good* expreſt: ye are happy, even in preſent, in the very midſt of them; they do not trouble your happy eſtate; yea they advance it.

Thus ſolid indeed is the happineſs of the Saints that in the loweſt condition, it remains the ſame: diſgraces caves, priſons, and chains, caſt them where you will, ſtill happy: a Diamond in the mire foyled and trampled on yet ſtill retains its own worth.

But this is more, that the very things that ſeem to make them miſerable, do not only not do that, but on the contrary do make them the more happy they are gainers by their loſſes, and attain more liberty by their thraldomes, and more honour by their diſgraces, and more peace by their troubles: the World and all their enemies are exceedingly befool'd in ſtriving with them, not only can they not undo them, but by all their enmity and practiſes, they do them pleaſure, and raiſe them higher; with what weapons ſhall they fight? How ſhall they ſet upon a Chriſtian, that are his enemy? where ſhall they hit them, ſeeing

ſeeing all the wrongs they do him, do indeed enrich and ennoble him; and the more he is depreſt, he flouriſhes the more: certainly the bleſſedneſs of a Chriſtian is matchleſs and invincible.

But how holds this, *Happy in reproaches and by them*, 'tis not through their nature and vertue, for they are evil, ſo *Mat.* 5. 20. But (1.) By reaſon of the Cauſe. (2.) Of the accompanying and conſequent Comfort.

Firſt the Cauſe. *Negatively*, we have it *verſe* 15. *Poſitively* ver. 14, 16. *Not as an evil doer*, that ſtains thy holy profeſſion, and damps thy comfort, and clouds thy happineſs, diſprofits thee and diſhonours thy Lord.

But for *the name of Chriſt*, and what is there ſo rough, that that will not make pleaſant, to ſuffer with Chriſt and for Chriſt, who ſuffered ſo much and ſo willingly for thee? hath he not gone through all before thee, and made all eaſie and lovely? hath he not ſweetned poverty, and perſecutions, and hatred, and diſgraces, and death it ſelf? perfum'd the grave, and turn'd it from a pit of horrour into a ſweet reſting bed? And thus love of Chriſt judgeth, thinks all lovely that is for him, is glad to meet with difficulties, and ambitious of ſuffering for him: ſcorn and contempt a thing of hard digeſtion; but much inward heat of love digeſts it eaſily, reproaches bitter, but the reproaches of Chriſt ſweet. Take their true value, *Heb.* 11. The reproaches of Chriſt greater riches than the treaſures of *Egypt*, his very worſt things, better than the beſt of the World. A touch of Chriſt turns all into gold; his reproaches *riches*, as there, and *honour*, as here: Happy not only afterwards, ye ſhall be happy, but happy in preſent, and that not only in apprehenſion

of that after happineſs, as ſure and as already preſent, which Faith doth; but even for that they poſſeſs the preſence and comforts of the Spirit.

For the Spirit of Glory.] This accompanies diſgraces for him; his Spirit, *the Spirit of Glory and of God*; with your ſuffering goes the name of Chriſt, and the Spirit of Chriſt: take them thus, when reproaches are caſt upon you for his name, and you bear them by his Spirit, and his Spirit moſt fit to ſupport you under them, yea to raiſe you above them; they are ignominious and inglorious, he is the Spirit of glory; they are humane reproaches, he the Divine Spirit, *the Spirit of Glory and of God*, that is, the glorious Spirit of God.

And this is the advantage, the leſs the Chriſtian finds eſteem and acceptance in the World, the more he turns inward to ſee what's there, and there he finds a down weight counterpoiſe of excellency and glory, even in this preſent condition, as the pledge of the glory before him. The reproaches be fiery, but the *Spirit of glory reſteth upon you*, doth not give you a paſſing viſit, but ſtays within you, and is indeed yours. And in this he can take comfort, and let the foul weather blow over, let all the ſcoffs, and contempts abroad paſs as they come, having a glorious Spirit within, ſuch a gueſt honouring him with his preſence, and abode, and ſweet fellowſhip, and is indeed one with him. So that rich Miſer could ſay; when they ſcorned him in the ſtreets, he went home to his bags and huggs himſelf there at that ſight, ſay they what they would. How much more reaſonably may the Chriſtian ſay, *let them revile and bark, I have riches, and honour enough, that they ſee not.* And this is it makes the World, as they are a malicious party, ſo to be an incompetent

[*Populus me ſibilat, at mihi plaudo*]

incompetent Judge of the Chriſtians eſtate; they ſee the rugged unpleaſant outſide only, the right inſide, their eye cannot reach. We were miſerable indeed, were our comforts ſuch as they could ſee.

And as this is the conſtant eſtate of a Chriſtian, it is uſually moſt manifeſted to him in the time of his greateſt ſufferings, then (as we ſaid) he readily turns inward and ſees it moſt, and accordingly finds it moſt. God making this happy ſupplement and compenſation, that when they have leaſt of the World, they have moſt of himſelf, when they are moſt covered with the World's diſfavour, this favour ſhines brighteſt to them, as *Moſes* in the Cloud, in neareſt acceſs and ſpeech with God; when the Chriſtian is moſt clouded with diſtreſſes and diſgraces, then doth the Lord often ſhew himſelf moſt clearly to him.

If you be indeed Chriſtians, you will not be ſo much thinking at any time, how you may be free from all ſufferings and deſpiſings; but rather how you may go ſtrongly and cheerfully through them; lo here is the way, ſeek real and firm intereſt in Chriſt, and participance of Chriſt's Spirit, and then a look to him will make all eaſie and delightful. Thou wilt be aſhamed within thy ſelf to ſtart back, or give one foot at the encounter of a taunt, or reproach for him; thou wilt think for whom is it, is it not for him who for my ſake hid not his face from ſhame and ſpitting? and further he died; now how would I meet death for him, that ſhrink at the blaſt of a ſcornful word?

If you would know whether this his Spirit is and reſteth in you, it cannot be better known than by that very love, ardent love to him, and high eſteem of him; and from thence a willingneſs, yea a gladneſs to ſuffer any thing for him. 2. This *Spirit of Glory*

ſets

ſets the heart on glory; true glory makes heavenly things excellent in our thoughts, and ſets the World, the better and worſe, the honour and diſhonour of it, at a low rate.

The Spirit of the World is a baſe ignoble Spirit, even the higheſt pitch of it, thoſe that are projecting for Kingdoms, theſe are poor deſigns to that of the Chriſtian, which aſcend above all things under the Sun, and above the Sun it ſelf, and therefore he is not ſhaken with threats, nor taken with offers in theſe things. Excellent is that anſwer St. *Baſil* gives in the perſon of thoſe Martyrs to that Emperour, as making them (as he thought) great profers to draw them off, why, ſay they, *doeſt thou bid us ſo low as pieces of the World, we have learnt to deſpiſe it all.* This is not ſtupid, nor an affected ſtoutneſs of Spirit, but a humble ſublimeneſs, that the natural Spirit of a Man cannot reach unto.

But wilt thou ſay ſtill, this ſtops me, I do not find this Spirit in me, if I did, then I think I could be willing to ſuffer any thing. To this for preſent no more but this, doeſt thou find deſire that Chriſt may be glorified, and couldſt be content it were by thy ſuffering in any kind for him as called to it? art thou willing to give up thine own intereſt, and ſtudy and follow Chriſt's, and that thou mighteſt ſacrifice thine own credit, and name, to advance his? art thou unwilling to do any thing that might diſhonour him, nor unwilling to ſuffer any thing might honour him, or wouldeſt thou be thus? Then be not diſputing, but up and walk on in his ſtrength.

Now if any ſay, but his name is diſhonoured by theſe reproaches; true, ſays the Apoſtle, *on their part it is ſo, but not on yours.* They that reproach you do their

their beſt to make it reflect on Chriſt and his cauſe; but thus it is only on their part: you are ſufferers for his name, and ſo you glorifie it: your faith, and patience, and victory by theſe do declare the Divine power of grace, and the Goſpel working; They have made torturers aſhamed, and induced ſome beholders to ſhare with them. Thus though the prophane World intend it as far as they could reach to diſhonour the profeſſion of Chriſt; yet it ſticks not, but on the contrary he is glorified by your conſtancy.

And as the ignominy faſtens not, but the glory from the endurance; ſo they are obliged and certainly are ready according to the Apoſtles zeal, *verſ.* 16. *To glorifie God on this behalf*, that as he is glorified in them, ſo we may glorifie and bleſs him, that he hath dignified us ſo, that whereas we might have been left to a ſad ſinking task, to have ſuffered for various guilts our God hath changed the tenure and nature of our ſufferings, and make them to be for the name of Chriſt.

Thus doth not a ſpiritual mind ſwell on a conceit of conſtancy and courage, which is the readieſt way of ſelf undoing; But acknowledge all gift, even ſuffering, *To you its given not only to believe, but to ſuffer*, and ſo *to bleſs him* on that behalf. Oh! this love grows in ſuffering, ſo Acts 5. 41. *They went away rejoycing, that they were counted worthy to ſuffer ſhame for his name.*

Conſider, its but a ſhort while, and the wicked, and their ſcoffs ſhall vaniſh, they ſhall not be, this ſhame will preſently be done, and this diſgrace is of ſhort date, but the glory and *Spirit of glory* eternal, what though thou ſhouldeſt be poor, and defamed, and deſpiſed, and be the common mark of ſcorn, and all injuries, yet

'tis hard at the end. This is now thy part, the ſcene ſhall be changed. Kings here, real ones, are in deepeſt realty but ſtrange Kings, but when thou comeſt to alter the perſon now thou beareſt, here is the odds, thou waſt as a fool in appearance for a moment, and ſhall be truly a King for ever.

Verſe 17.

17: *For the time is come, that Judgement muſt begin at the houſe of God: and if it firſt begin at us, what ſhall the end be of them that obey not the Goſpel.*

THere is not only perfect equity, but withal a comely proportion and beauty in all the ways of God, had we opened eyes to diſcern particularly in this point of the ſufferings and afflictions of the Church. The Apoſtle here ſets it before his brethren, *for the time is come*, &c.

Where is firſt a paralel of the Lords dealing with his own and with the wicked, *ver* 17. 18, (2.) A perſwaſion of due compliance and confidence in his own upon that conſideration.

The paralel is in the *order*, and the *meaſure* of puniſhing; and it is ſo, that for the *order*, it begins at the houſe of God, ends upon the ungodly, and that carries in it the great difference in the *meaſure*, that it paſſes from the one on whom it begins, and reſts on the other on whom it ends; the full weight of it lies on for ever. Its ſo expreſt, *What ſhall be the end*, &c. Which imports not only, that

that Judgement ſhall overtake them in the end, but that it ſhall be their end, they ſhall end in it, and it ſhall be endleſs upon them.

The time is.] Indeed the whole time of this preſent life is ſo, its the time of ſuffering and purging for the Church, compaſſed with enemies that will afflict her, and ſubject to theſe impurities that need affliction. The Children of God are in their under age here, all their time they are Children, and have their frailties and childiſh follies; and therefore though they are not always under the ſtroke of the rod, for that they were not able to endure, yet they are under the diſcipline and uſe of the rod, all their time: and whereas the Wicked eſcape, till their day of full payment, the Children of God are in this life chaſtiſed with frequent afflictions, and ſo *the time* [ὁ καιρὸς] may here be taken according as the Apoſtle St. *Paul* uſes the ſame word, *Rom.* 8. 18. παθήματα τῦ νῦν καιρῦ. *The ſufferings of this preſent time.*

But withal it is true, and appears to be here implyed, that there be particular ſet times, that the Lord chuſes for the correcting of his Church, he hath the days prefixt and written in his *Ephemerides*, hath his days of correcting, wherein he goes round, from one Church to another, we thought it would never come to us, but we have now found the ſmart of it.

And here the Apoſtle may likely mean, the times of theſe hot perſecutions that were begun and continued, though with ſome intervalls, for two or three Ages. Thus *Apoc.* 6. after the *white Horſe*, immediately follows at his heels *the red*, and *the black*, and *the pale Horſe*. And as it was upon the firſt publiſhing of the Goſpel, ſo uſually upon the reſtoring of it, or upon remarkable reforms of the Church, and revivings of Religion, follow ſharp

and ſearching trials. As the lower cauſe of this is the rage, and malice of Satan, and the ungodly World, acted and ſtirred by him, againſt the purity and prevalency of Religion, ſo it is from a higher hand for better ends. The Lord will diſcover the multitudes of hypocrites, and empty profeſſors, that will at ſuch a time readily abound when Religion is upon an advancing way, and the ſtream of it runs ſtrong. Now by the counter current of troubles, ſuch fall back and are carried away. And the truth of grace in the hearts of Believers is advantaged by theſe hazards, and ſufferings, they are put to faſten their hold the better on Chriſt, to ſeek more experience of the real and ſweet conſolations of the Goſpel, that may uphold them againſt the counterblaſts of ſuffering. Thus is Religion made a more real and ſolid thing in the hearts of true Believers; they are entered to that way of receiving Chriſt, and his Croſs together, that they may ſee their bargain, and not think it a ſurprize.

Judgement.] Though all ſufferings are not ſuch, yet commonly there is that unſuitable and unwary walking amongſt Chriſtians, that even their ſufferings for the cauſe of God, though unjuſt from Men, yet are from God juſt puniſhments of their miſcarriages towards him, in their former ways, their ſelf pleaſing and earthlineſs, taking too much reliſh in the delights of this World, forgetting their inheritance and home, and conforming themſelves to the World, walking too like it.

Begin.] The Church of God puniſht, while the wicked are free and flouriſh in the World, poſſibly all their days, or if Judgement here reach them, yet it is later; it begins at the Houſe of God. (1.) This holds in them that profeſs his name, and are of the viſible

ble Church, compared with them that are without the pale of it, and are its avowed enemies. (2.) Thoſe that profeſs a deſire of more religious, and holy courſe of life within the Church compared with the profane multitude. (3.) They that are indeed more Spiritual, and holy, and come nearer unto God, compared with others that fall ſhort of that meaſure, in all it holds that the Lord doth more readily exerciſe them with afflictions, and correct their wandrings than any other.

And this truly is moſt reaſonable, and the reaſon lies in the very name given the Church, *The Houſe of God.*

1. The ſins of the Church have their peculiar aggravations, that fall not upon others, that, which is ſimply a ſin in ſtrangers to God, is in his people the breach of a known and received law, and a law daily unfolded, and ſet before them, yea its againſt their Oath of Allegiance, 'tis perfidie and breach of Covenant, committed both againſt the cleareſt light, and ſtricteſt bonds, and higheſt mercies, and ſtill the more particular profeſſion of his name, and teſtimonies of his love, make ſin the more ſinful, and the puniſhment of it the more reaſonable. The ſins of the Church are all twice dipt *Dibapha*, *Iſa.* 1. Have a double die, they are once breach of the law, and they are again, ungrate and diſloyall breach of promiſe.

2. As there is unqueſtionable equity, ſo there is an evident congruity in it. God is ruler of all the World, but particularly of his Church, therefore here called *his Houſe*, wherein he hath a ſpecial reſidence and preſence. And therefore moſt ſuitable, that there he be ſpecially obſerved and obey'd, and if diſobey'd that he take notice of it and puniſh it, that he ſuffer

not himſelf to be diſhonour'd to his face by thoſe of his own Houſe; and therefore whoſoever eſcape, his own ſhall not Amos 3.2. *You only have I known of all the Families of the Earth: therefore will I puniſh you for all your iniquities.* He that righteouſly judges and rules all Nations, it is fit he make his Juſtice moſt evident and exemplary in his own Houſe, where it may beſt be remarkt, and where it will beſt appear how impartial he is in puniſhing ſin; ſo a King, as the Pſalmiſt, *Pſal.* 101. that he may rule the Land well, makes his own Houſe exemplary. It is you know one ſpecial qualification of a Biſhop and Paſtor, 1 Tim. 3.4. *One that ruleth well his own Houſe, having his Children in ſubjection. For if a Man know not how to rule his own Houſe, how ſhall he take care of the Church of God?* Now this therefore more eminently appears in the Supream Lord of the Church, as his own Houſe; and therefore when he finds diſobedience there, he will firſt puniſh that: ſo he clears himſelf; and the wicked World being afterward puniſht, their mouths are ſtopt with the preceding puniſhment of the Church; he will not ſpare his own; yea, they ſhall be firſt ſcourged? *what then ſhall be the end*, &c.

And indeed the purity of his Nature, if it be every where contrary to all ſinful impurity, it cannot but moſt appear in his peculiar dwelling Houſe, that he will have neat and clean. If he hate ſin all the World over, where its neareſt him he hates it moſt, and teſtifies his hatred of it; will not endure it in his preſence: as cleanly neat perſons, cannot well look upon any thing that is naſty, much leſs will they ſuffer it come near them, or touch them, and to continue in their preſence in the Houſe where they dwell; the Lord *that is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity*, will not

not abide it within his own doors; and the nearer any comes to him, the leſs can he endure any unholineſs or ſinful pollution in them, *he will be ſanctified in all that come nigh him*, Lev. 10. ſo in his Miniſters; Oh! how pure ought they to be, and how provoking and hateful to him are their impurities: therefore in that commiſſion to the Deſtroyers, *Ezek* 9. 20. to which place the Apoſtle may here have ſome eye; *Go*, ſays he, *ſlay the old and young, and begin at my ſanctuary*. They were they that had polluted his worſhip, and there the firſt ſtroke lighted. And in a Spiritual Senſe, becauſe all his People are his only elect Prieſthood, and ſhould be *holineſs to the Lord*; and when they are not really ſo; do not ſanctifie him in their walking; he ſanctifies himſelf, declares his holineſs in his Judgments on them.

3. Mercy, in this, even under the habit of Judgment, love walks ſecretly and works; ſo loving and ſo wiſe a Father will not undo his Children by ſparing the rod; but *becauſe he loves, rebukes and chaſtens*, *Heb.* 12. *Prov.* 3. 11. *Apoc.* 3. His Church, his Houſe, therefore that he may delight in it, and take pleaſure to dwell in it, and make it happy with his preſence, he will have it often waſhed, and made clean, and the filth and rubbiſh ſcoured and purged out of it: this argues his gracious purpoſe of abiding in it.

And as he doth it, that he may delight in his People, ſo that they may delight in him, and in him alone, imbiters the World's Breaſt to wean them; makes the World hate them, that they may the more eaſily hate it; ſuffers them not to ſettle upon it, and fall into a complacency with it; makes it unpleaſant to them by many and ſharp afflictions, that they with the more willingneſs may come off, and be united;

and

and that they may remember home the more, and ſeek their comforts above, finding ſo little below, may turn in to him, and delight themſelves in communion with him. That their prayers may aſcend the more thick, that ſweet incenſe, he kindles theſe fires of trial to them; for though it ſhould not be ſo, yet ſo it is, that in times of eaſe they would grow readily remiſs and formal that way.

He is gracious and wiſe, knows what he does with them, and the thoughts he thinks towards them is all for their advantage, purging their iniquities, *Iſa.* 27. purges out impatience, and earthlineſs, and ſelf-will, and carnal ſecurity, and thus refines them for Veſſels of Honour; we ſee in a Jewellers Shop, that as there are Pearls and Diamonds, and other precious Stones; there are Files, cutting Inſtruments, and many ſharp Tools for their poliſhing: and while they are in the Work-houſe they are continual Neighbours to them, and come often under them. The Church is God's Jewelry, his Work houſe, where his Jewels are a poliſhing for his Palace, and Houſe, and thoſe he eſpecially eſteems and means to make moſt reſplendent, he hath oftener his Tools upon them.

Thus obſerve it, as the Church to other Societies, ſo in it a Congregation or Family, one more diligently ſeeking after God than the reſt, they ſhall readily meet with more trials, and be oftener under affliction than any of the Company; either under contempt and ſcorn, or poverty and ſickneſs, or ſome one preſſure or other, outward or inward, and thoſe inward trials are the neareſt and ſharpeſt that the World ſees leaſt, and yet the Soul feels moſt: And yet all theſe both outward and inward have love, unſpeakable love in them all, to purge and poliſh them by increaſing of Grace to fit them for Glory. *Inf.*

Inf. 1. We will not be ſo fooliſh as to promiſe our ſelves impunity by our relation to God, as his Church in covenant with him; if once we thought ſo, ſure our experience hath undeceived us, and let not what we have ſuffered harden us, as if the worſt were paſt, we may rather fear its but a pledge and beginning of ſharper Judgment? why do we not conſider our unhumbled and unpurged condition, and tremble before the Lord? would we ſave him a labour, he would take it well, purge our Souls, that he may not be put to further purging by new Judgments; were we buſie reading our preſent condition, we would ſee very legible foreſigns of further Judgments, the Lord taking away his eminent and worthy Servants, that are as the very Pillars of the Publick Peace and Welfare, and taking away Counſel, and Courage, and Union from the reſt; forſaking us in our meetings, and leaving us in the dark to grop and to ruſh one upon another.

2. The diſſentions and jarrings in the State and Church are likely upon imagination to bring it to a reality; theſe unnatural burnings threaten new fires of publick Judgments to be kindled amongſt us.

3. That general deſpiſing of the Goſpel, and abounding of prophaneneſs throughout the Land, not yet purged, but our great ſin remaining in us, calls for more fire and more boiling.

4. The general coldneſs and deadneſs of Spirit, want of that zeal for God, that communion of Saints; that mutual ſtirring up one another to Holineſs, and which is to all, the reſtoring of Prayer, that frozen benummedneſs in that ſo neceſſary Work; that preventer of Judgments; that binder of the hands of God from puniſhments, and opener of them unto them, pouring forth of mercies; Oh! this is a ſad condition in it

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ſelf, though it portended no further Judgment, the Lord hiding himſelf, and the Spirit of Zeal and Prayer withdrawn, and ſcarce any lamenting it, or ſo much as perceiving it: where our days either of ſolemn Prayer or Praiſes, as if cauſe of neither, and yet clear cauſe of both. Truly *M. B.* we have need if ever to beſtir our ſelves; are not the Kingdoms at this preſent brought to the extream point of their higheſt hazard, and yet who lays it to heart.

Inf. 2. Learn to give God right conſtruction in all his dealings with his Church, and with thy Soul; for his Church, there may be a time wherein thou ſhall ſee it not only toſſed; but, to thy thinking, covered and ſwallowed up with tears; but wait a little it ſhall arrive ſafe. This common ſtumbling ſtone, walk by the light of the Word, and the eye of Faith looking on it, and thou ſhalt paſs by, and not ſtumble at it, the Church mourns, and *Babylon* ſings, ſits as a Queen, but for how long; ſhe ſhall come down and ſit in the duſt, and *Zion* ſhall be glorious, and put on her beautiful Garments, and *Babylon* ſhall not look for another revelation to raiſe her again, no, ſhe ſhall never riſe. The Angel took up a Stone like a great Milſtone, and caſt it into the Sea, ſaying, *Thus with violence ſhall the great City* Babylon *be thrown down, and ſhall be found no more at all.*

Be not ſudden, take God's work together, do not judge of it by parcels; it is indeed all Wiſdom and Righteouſneſs; but we ſhall beſt diſcern the beauty of it when we look on it in the frame, and when it ſhall be fully compleated and finiſht, and our eyes enlightned to take a fuller and clearer view of it, than we can have here; Oh! what wonder? what endleſs wondering will it command?

We read of *Joſeph* hated, and ſold, and impriſon'd, and all moſt unjuſtly; but becauſe within a leaf or two, we find him freed and exalted, and his Brethren coming Supplicants to him, we are ſatisfied: but the things that are for the preſent cloudy and dark, our ſhort haſty Spirits cannot learn to wait a little till we ſee the other ſide, and what end the Lord makes; we ſee *Judgment beginning at the Houſe of God*, and this perplexes us, while we conſider not the reſt, what *ſhall be the end of them that obey not the Goſpel*? God begins the Judgment on his Church for a little time, that it may end and reſt upon his enemies for ever. And indeed he leaves the wicked laſt in the puniſhment; ſo as he makes uſe of them for the puniſhing of his Church, they are *his rod, Iſa.* 10. But then when he hath done that work with them, they are *broken and burnt*, v. 16. and that when they are at the height of inſolency and boaſting, not knowing what hand moves them, and ſmites his People with them for a while, *till the day of their conſuming come*, v. 24, 25. let the vile enemy that hath ſhed our blood, and inſulted over us rejoyce in their preſent ſparing, and in mens procuring of it, and pleading for it; there is another hand whence we may look for Juſtice, and though it may be the Judgment begun at us, is not yet ended, and that we may yet further (and that juſtly) find them our ſcourge, yet certainly we may, and ought to look beyond that unto the end of the Lord's work, which ſhall be the ruin of his Enemies, and the peace of his People, and the glory of his Name.

Of them that obey not the Goſpel] The end of all the Ungodly is terrible; but eſpecially of ſuch as heard the Goſpel, and have not received and obey'd it.

The Word hath in it both Unbelief and Diſobedi-

ence, and theſe are inſeparable, Unbelief is the grand point of Diſobedience in it ſelf, and the ſpring of all other diſobedience: and the pity is, men will not believe it to be thus.

They think it an eaſie, and a common thing to believe, who doth not believe? Oh! but rather, who does? *who hath believed our report*? were our own miſery and the happineſs that is in Chriſt believed, were the riches of Chriſt, and the love of Chriſt believed, would not this perſwade men to forſake their ſins, and the World to embrace him?

But men run away with an extraordinary fancy of believing, and do not deeply conſider what news the Goſpel brings, and how much it concerns them: ſometimes it may be they have a ſudden thought of it, and they think, I will think on it better at ſome other time; but when comes that time; one buſineſs ſteps in after another and ſhuffles it out: Men are not at leaſure to be ſaved.

The Goſpel of God.] His embaſſy of Peace to Men, the riches of his mercy and free love opened up and ſet forth, not ſimply to be lookt on, but laid hold on. The glorious holy God declaring his mind of agreement with Man in his own Son; his blood ſtreaming forth in it to waſh away uncleanneſs, and yet this Goſpel not obeyed. Sure the conditions of it very hard, and the commands muſt be grievous, that they are not hearkened to; why, judge you if they be. The great command is that, to receive that Salvation; and the other is this, to love that Saviour, and there is no more; perfect obedience is not now the thing, and the obedience that is required, that love makes it ſweet and eaſie to us, and acceptable to him. This is proclaimed to all that hear the Goſpel, and the greateſt

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part refuſe it, they love themſelves, and their luſts, and this preſent World, and will not change, and ſo they periſh.

They periſh? what's that? what is their end? I will anſwer that but as the Apoſtle doth, and that is even asking the queſtion over again, *what ſhall be their end?*

There is no ſpeaking of it; a Curtain drawn; ſilent wonder expreſſes it beſt, telling it cannot be expreſt; how then ſhall it be endured? It is true, that there be reſemblances uſed in Scripture, giving us ſome glance of it; we hear of a burning Lake, a Fire that goes not out, and a Worm that dies not; but theſe are but ſhadows to the real miſery of them that obey not the Goſpel; Oh! to be filled with the wrath of God, the ever living God for ever. What words or thoughts can reach it? Oh! Eternity, Eternity; Oh! that we did believe it.

This ſame paralel is continued in the following Verſe in other terms, for the clearer expreſſion, and deeper impreſſion of it.

Verſe 18.

And if the righteous ſcarcely be ſaved, where ſhall the ungodly and ſinner appear?

IT is true then, that they are ſcarce ſaved, even they that endeavour to walk uprightly in the ways of God, that's the Righteous; here they are ſcarcely ſaved. That imports not any uncertainty or hazard in the thing it ſelf to the end, in reſpect of the purpoſe, and performance of God: but only the great difficulties, and hard encounters in the way, that they go through ſo many tribulations and tentations, ſo many fightings without, and fears within: the Chriſtian ſo

ſimple and weak, and his enemies ſo crafty, and p ow er-ful.

The Oppoſitions of the wicked World, their hatreds, and ſcorns, and moleſtations, the ſlights and violence of Satan, and the worſt of all, the ſtrength of their own corruptions. And by reaſon of abounding corruption, ſuch frequent, almoſt continual need of purging by afflictions and trials; to be ſtill under Phyſick; to be of neceſſity at ſometimes drained and brought ſo low, till there is ſcarce ſtrength or life remaining in them.

And truely all outward difficulties would be but matter of eaſe, would be as nothing, were it not the incumberance of luſts, and corruptions within; were a man to meet diſgraces and ſufferings for Chriſt, how eaſily would he go through them, yea, and rejoyce in them, were he rid of the fretting impatience, the pride, and ſelf-love of his own carnal heart; theſe clog and trouble worſt, and he cannot ſhake them off, nor prevail againſt them without much pains, many prayers and tears; and many times after much wreſtling, ſcarce finds that he hath gained any ground; yea, ſometimes is foiled and thrown by them.

And ſo in all other duties ſuch a fighting and continual combate with a revolting backſliding heart; the fleſh pulling, and dragging downwards, when he would mount up, finds himſelf as a Bird with a ſtone tied to its foot, hath Wings that flutter to be upwards, but is preſſed down with the weight faſtened to him; what ſtruggling with wandrings and deadneſs in hearing, and reading, and prayer: and that which is moſt grievous, that by their unwary walking, and the prevailing of ſome corruption, they ſadden the Spirit of God and provoke him to hide his face,

and

and withdraw his comforts. How much pain to attain any thing, any particular grace of humility, or meekneſs, or ſelf-denial; and if any thing attained, how hard to keep and maintain it againſt the contrary party; how often driven back to their old point? if they do but ceaſe from ſtriving a little, they are carried back by the ſtream: and what returns of doubtings and misbelief, after they thought they were got ſomewhat above them; in ſo much that ſometimes they are at the point of giving over, and thinking it will never be for them: and yet through all thoſe are they brought ſafe home, there is another ſtrength that bears them up, and brings them through: but yet theſe things, and many more of this nature argue the difficulty of their courſe, and that it is not ſo eaſie a thing to come to Heaven as moſt imagine it.

Inf. Thou that findeſt ſo little ſtop, and conflict in it, goeſt thy round of eternal duties, and all is well; art no more troubled; thou haſt need to enquire after a long time ſpent in that way, am I right? am I not yet to begin? ſure this looks not like the way to Heaven, as it is deſcribed in the Scripture; it is too ſmooth and eaſie to be right.

And if the way of the Righteous be ſo hard, then how hard ſhall be the end of the ungodly and ſinner that walks in ſin with delight; it were ſtrange if they ſhould be at ſuch pains, and with great difficulty attain their end: and he ſhould come in amongſt them in the end, they were fools indeed; true, if it were ſo; but what if it be not ſo, then the wicked is the fool, and ſhall find he is, when he ſhall not be able to ſtand in Judgment, where ſhall he appear; when to the end he might not appear, he would be glad to be ſmother'd under the weight of the Hills,

Hills, and Mountains, if they could ſhelter him, from appearing.

And what is the aim of all this that we have ſpoken, or can ſpeak in this ſubject, but that ye may be moved to take into deeper thoughts the concernment of your immortal Souls. Oh! that you would be perſwaded. Oh! that you would make in to Jeſus Chriſt and ſeek Salvation in him; ſeek to be covered with his righteouſneſs, and to be led by his Spirit in the ways of righteouſneſs. That will ſeal to you the happy certainty of the end, and overcome for you all the difficulties of the way: what is the Goſpel of Chriſt preached for? what was the blood of Chriſt ſhed for? was it not, that by receiving him, we might eſcape condemnation; nay this drew him from heaven, *he came that we might have life, and might have it more abundantly.*

Verſe 19.

19. *Wherefore let them that ſuffer according to the will of God, commit the keeping of their Souls to him in well doing, as unto a faithful creator.*

NOthing doth ſo eſtabliſh the mind in the rollings, and turbulency of preſent things, as both a look above them, and a look beyond them; above them, to the ſteady and good hand by which they are ruled, and beyond them to the ſweet and beautiful end, to which by that hand, they ſhall be brought. This the Apoſtle

ſtle layes here as the foundation of that patience, and peace in troubles, wherewith he would have his brethren furniſht. Aud thus he cloſes this in theſe words. *Wherefore let them that ſuffer according to the will of God, commit the keeping of their Souls to him in well doing, as unto a faithful creator.*

The words contain the true principle of Chriſtian patience, and tranquility of mind in the ſufferings of this life, expreſſing both wherein it conſiſts, and what are the grounds of it.

1. It lies in this committing the Soul unto God, the word ἐν ἀγαθοποιΐᾳ added is a true qualification of this, that it be *in well doing*, according to the preceeding Doctrine which the Apoſtle gives clearly and largely, *ver.* 15, 16. If they would have inward peace amidſt outward trouble, they muſt walk by the rule of peace, and keep ſtrictly to it; if you would commit your Soul to the keeping of God, know he is a holy God; and an unholy Soul that walks in any way of wickedneſs known, or ſecret, is no fit commodity to put into his pure hand to keep. Therefore as ye would have this confidence to give your holy God the keeping of your Soul, and that he accept of it, and take it off your hand, beware of willing pollutions and unholy ways; walk ſo as you diſcredit not your protector and move him to be aſhamed of you, and diſclaim you. Shall it be ſaid you live under his ſhelter and walk inordinately? as this cannot well be, you cannot well believe it to be: looſe ways will looſen your hold of him and confidence in him; you will be driven to queſtion your intereſt, and to think, ſure I do but delude my ſelf; can I be under his ſafeguard, and yet follow the courſe of the World, and my corrupt heart, certainly be it who will, he will not be a guardian and patron

tron of wickedneſs. No, *he is not a God that hath pleaſure in iniquity, nor ſhall evil dwell with him.* If thou give thy Soul to him to keep upon terms of liberty to ſin, he will turn it out of his Doors, and remit it back to thee to look to, as thou wilt thy ſelf; yea, in the ways of ſin, thou doſt indeed ſteel it back and carrieſt it out from him; thou putteſt thy ſelf out of the compaſs of his defence; goeſt without the trenches, and art at thine own hazard, expos'd to armies of miſchiefs and miſeries.

Pſ. 5.

Inf. This then is primely to be lookt to, you that would have ſafety in God in evil times, beware of evil ways: for in theſe it cannot be: if you will be ſafe in him, you muſt ſtay with him, and in all your ways keep within him, as your fortreſs; now in the wayes of ſin you run out from him.

Hence 'tis we have ſo little eſtabliſht confidence in God in times of trial, we take ways of our own, and will be gadding, and ſo we are ſurprized and taken, as they that are often venturing out into the enemies reach, and cannot ſtay within the walls; 'tis no idle repetition, *Pſal.* 91. 1. *He that dwelleth in the ſecret place of the moſt high, ſhall abide under the ſhaddow of the Almighty.* He that wanders not out but ſtays there, ſhall find himſelf there hid from danger. They that rove out from God in their ways, are diſquieted and toſſed with fears; this is the fruit of their own ways; but the Soul that is indeed given to him to keep, keeps near him.

Study pure and holy walking, if you would have your confidence firm, and have boldneſs and joy in God: you will find it, that a little ſin will ſhake your truſt, and diſturb your peace more than the greateſt ſufferings, yea in thoſe your aſſurance and joy in God will

will grow and abound moſt, if ſin be kept out, that's the trouble feaſt, that unquiets the Conſcience, which while it continues good, is a continual feaſt, ſo much ſin as gets in, ſo much peace will go out; afflictions cannot break in upon it to break it, but ſin doth. All the winds that blow about the Earth from all points ſtir it not; only that within the bowels of it makes the Earthquake.

I do not mean that for infirmities a Chriſtian ought to be diſcouraged; but take heed of walking in any way of ſin: for that will unſettle thy confidence: innocency and holy walking makes the Soul of a ſound conſtitution, that the counter blaſts of affliction wear not out, nor alter it not; ſin makes it ſickly, and crazy, that it can endure nothing; therefore ſtudy to keep your Conſciences pure, and they ſhall be peacable, yea in the worſt times readily moſt peacable and beſt furniſht with ſpiritual confidence and comfort.

Commit the keeping of their Souls.] The Lord is an entire protector, he keeps the bodies, yea all that belongs to the believer, and as much as is good for him; makes all ſafe, keeps all his bones, not one of them is broken; yea ſays our Saviour *the very hairs of your head are numbered* But that which is in the Believers account, and in Gods account, ſo certainly in it ſelf moſt precious, is principally committed and received into keeping, *their Souls.*

They would gladlieſt be ſecured in that here, that ſhall be ſafe in the midſt of all hazards. That whatſoever be loſt, that may not, that's the Jewel, therefore the prime care of that, if it be ſafe all is well, 'tis riches enough? *What ſhall it profit a man though he gain the whole World*, ſays our Saviour, *and loſe his Soul*? and ſo what ſhall it diſprofit a Man, though he loſe the whole World, if he gain his Soul. Nothing at all.

When times of trial come, Oh! what a buſtle to hide this and that, to fly, and carry away, and make ſafe that which is but traſh and rubbiſh to the precious Soul, but how few thoughts of that? were we in our wits, that would be all at all times, not only in trouble, but in days of peace. Oh! how ſhall I make ſure about my Soul; let all go as it may, can I be ſecured and perſwaded in that point, I deſire no more,

Now the way is this, commit them to God, this many ſay, but few do, give them into his hand, lay them up there; ſo the word is, and they are ſafe and may be quiet and compoſed.

In patience poſſeſs your Souls, ſays our Saviour; impatient freting Souls are out of themſelves, their owners do not poſſeſs them. Now the way to poſſeſs them our ſelves in patience, is thus, to commit them to him in confidence, then we only poſſeſs them, when he keeps them. They are eaſily diſquieted and ſhakt in peices while they are in our hands; but in his hand they are above the reach of dangers and fears.

Inf. Now this is the proper act of Faith, rolls the Soul over on God, ventures it in his hand, and reſts ſatisfied concerning it, being there. And there is no way but this, to be quiet within, to be impregnable, and unmoveable in all aſſaults and changes fixed, believing on free love; therefore be perſwaded to reſolve in that, not doubting and diſputing, whether ſhall I believe or no; ſhall I think he will ſuffer me to lay my ſoul upon him to keep? ſo unworthy, ſo guilty a Soul, were it not preſumption; Oh! what ſaiſt thou? why doeſt thou thus diſhonour him, and diſquiet thy ſelf; if thou haſt a purpoſe to walk in any way of wickedneſs, indeed thou art not for him; yea, thou comeſt not near him, to give him thy Soul; but wouldeſt thou have

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it delivered from ſin, rather then from trouble, yea rather than from hell; is that the chief ſafety thou ſeekeſt, to be kept from iniquity, from thine iniquity, thy beloved ſins; doeſt thou deſire to dwell in him and walk with him, then whatſoever is thy guiltineſs, and unworthineſs come forward, and give him thy Soul to keep; if he ſhould ſeem to refuſe it preſs it on him; if he ſtretch not forth his hand lay it down at his foot, and leave it there, and reſolve not to take it back; ſay, Lord thou haſt made us thoſe Souls, thou calleſt for them again to be committed to thee, here is one, it is unworthy, but what Soul is not ſo? is moſt unworthy, but therein will the riches of thy grace appear moſt in receiving it, and leave it with him; and know he will make thee a good accompt of it. Now loſe goods, or credit, or friends, or life it ſelf, it imports not; the main is ſure if ſo be thy Soul be out of hazard; *I ſuffer theſe things for the Goſpel,* ſays the Apoſtle, *nevertheleſs I am not aſhamed*; why? *for I know whom I have truſted, and am perſwaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed to him againſt that Day.* 2 Tim. 1. 12.

Now the ground of this confidence is in theſe two, in him whom we truſt, *ability*, and *fidelity*. There is much in perſwaſion of the power of God, though few think they queſtion that, there is in us ſecret undiſcovered unbelief, even in that point. Therefore the Lord ſo often makes mention of it in the Prophets, *Iſa.* 50. 3. &c. And in this point the Apoſtle particulary expreſſes, *I am perſwaded that he is able to keep*, &c. So this Apoſtle, *chap.* 1. 5. *Kept by the power of God through faith unto Salvation ready to be reveal'd in the laſt time.* This very needful to be conſidered in regard of the many and great oppoſitions and dangers, the powerful enemies

that ſeek after our Souls; *He is able to keep them, for he is ſtronger than all, and none can pluck them out of his hand*, ſays our Saviour. This the Apoſtle here hath in that word (*Creator*,) if he was able to give them being, ſure he is able to keep them from periſhing. This relation of a Creator implies likewiſe a benign propenſion and good will to the works of his hands; if he gave them us at firſt, when once they were not, forming them of nothing, will he not give us them again, being put into his hand for ſafety.

And as he is powerful, he is no leſs faithful, *a faithful Creator*, Truth it ſelf. They that believe on him he never deceives nor diſappoints. Well might St. *Paul* ſay, *I know whom I have truſted*; Oh! the advantage of faith. It engages the truth and power of God, his royal Word and honour lies upon it to preſerve the Soul, that faith gives him in keeping, if he remain able and faithful to perform his Word, that Soul ſhall not periſh.

There be in the words other two grounds of quietneſs of Spirit in ſufferings. (1.) It is according to the will of God. The believing Soul ſubjected and levelled to that complying with his good pleaſure in all, cannot have a more powerful perſwaſive than this, that all is ordered by his will. This ſettled in the heart would ſettle it much, and make it even in all things not only to know, but wiſely and deeply to conſider, that it is thus; That all is meaſured in Heaven; every dram of thy troubles weighed by that skilful hand, that doth all in weight, number, and meaſure.

And then conſider him as thy God, and father, who hath taken ſpecial charge of thee, and thy Soul thou haſt given it to him, and he hath received it.

And upon this conſideration ſtudy to follow his will in all, to have no will but his. This is thy duty and thy wiſdom, nothing gained by ſpurning and ſtruggling but to hurt and vex thy ſelf; but by complying all is gained, ſweet peace; it is the very ſecret, the myſtery of ſolid peace within, to reſign to his will, to be diſpoſed of at his pleaſure without the leaſt contrary thought. And thus as two faced pictures, thoſe ſufferings, and troubles, and whatſoever elſe to look to it on the one ſide as painful to the fleſh, hath an unpleaſant viſage, yet go about a little, and look upon it as thy fathers will, and then it is ſmiling, and beautiful, and lovely. This I would recommend to you not only for temporals as eaſier there, but in ſpiritual things, your comforts and ſenſible enlargements, to love all he does; its the ſum of Chriſtianity, thy will crucify'd and the will of thy Lord thy alone deſire, joy or ſorrow, ſickneſs or health, life or death, in all, in all *thy will be done.*

The other ground is in the firſt word, reflecting on the foregoing diſcourſe *Wherefore*; what? ſeeing your reproaches and ſufferings are not endleſs; yea they are ſhort, they ſhall end, and quickly end, and end in glory, be not troubled about them, overlook them, the eye of faith will do it, a moment, what are they? this is the great cauſe of our diſquietneſs in preſent troubles and griefs, we forget their end, we are affected with our condition of this preſent life, as if it were all, and it is nothing. Oh! how quickly ſhall all the enjoyments, and all the ſufferings of this life paſs away, and be, as if they had not been.

The End of the Fourth Chapter.

1 Ep. St. *Peter* Chap. V. Ver. 1.

The elders which are among you, I exhort, who am alſo an elder, and a witneſs of the ſufferings of Chriſt, and alſo a partaker of the glory that ſhall be revealed.

THE Church of Chriſt being one body, is intereſſed in the condition and carriage of each particular Chriſtian, as a part of it; but more eminently in thoſe, that are more eminent, and organick parts of it. Therefore the Apoſtle, after many Excellent directions given to all his Chriſtian Brethren to whom he writes, doth moſt reaſonably and fitly add this expreſs Exhortation to theſe, that had overſight and charge of the reſt, *The Elders that are amongſt you*, &c.

The words have (1.) A particular definement of the Perſons exhorted and exhorting. (2.) The Tenour of the Exhortation it ſelf. The former in the 1 verſe, the Perſons exhorted, *The Elders among you.* Firſt,

Elders.] This here, as often, is a name not of Age, but of Office; yet named by that Age that is, or ought to be moſt ſuitably qualified to ſuch an office, and imports, that men, though not aged; yet if called to that office, ſhould be noted with that Wiſdom and gravity of mind and carriage, which may give that authority, and com-

command that reſpect, that is requiſite for their calling; not *Novices*, as St. *Paul* ſpeaks, not as a light bladder being eaſily blown up, as young unſtable minds are, but ſuch as young *Timothy* was in humility and diligence, as the Apoſtle teſtifies of him, *Phil.* 2. 20. and further exhorts him to be, 1 Tim. 4. 12. *Let no man deſpiſe thy youth: but be an example of believers in word, in converſation, in charity, in faith, in purity.*

The name of Elders indifferently ſignifies either their age, or their calling, and of ruling, ſometimes civil Rulers, ſometimes Paſtors of the Church, as amongſt the Jews both. Here it appears that Paſtors are meant, as the Exhortation of feeding the flock evidences; which though it ſometimes ſignifie ruling, and here may comprile it, yet is chiefly by Doctrine; and then the ſtile given to Chriſt in the encouragement added, *the chief Shepherd.*

A due frame of ſpirit and carriage in the Elders, particularly the Apoſtles of the Church, is a thing of prime concern for the good of it. It is one of the heavieſt threatnings, when the Lord declares that he will give a rebellious People ſuch Teachers and Prophets as they deſerved, and indeed deſired: *If there be a man to prophecy of wine and ſtrong drink, ſuch a one ſhall be a prophet*, ſays he to that People. And on the other ſide amongſt the ſweeteſt promiſes of mercy, this is not the leaſt, to be furniſht with plenty of faithful Teachers. Though prophane men make no reckoning of it, yet were it in the hardeſt times, they that know the Lord will account of it as he doth, a ſweet allay of all ſufferings and hardſhip; *though the Lord give you the bread of adverſity, and the water of affliction, yet*
Iſa. 30. 20. *ſhall not thy teachers be removed into a corner*, &c. Oh! how rich in promiſes, that Jer. 3. 15. *I will give you Paſtors acording to my own heart.*

Inf.

Inf. This promiſe to be preſt and ſuited for by earneſt prayer; were people much in this duty, Paſtors would find it, and ſo people themſelves receive back their Prayers with much gain into their own boſom, have the returned benefit of it: as the Vapours that go up from below, fall down upon the Earth again in ſweet ſhowers, and make it fruitful; thus went there many prayers up for Paſtors, their Doctrine would *drop as rain, and deſtill as dew*; and the ſweet influence of it would make fruitful the Valleys, humble hearts receiving it. And at this time it is very needful that the Lord be much ſuited for the continuance and increaſe of his favour in this his Church, as they that have power would be more careful of thoſe due means, that in Schools of learning or otherways are needful for the enablement of men for this ſervice; ſo all generally both People and Paſtors, and ſuch as are offering themſelves to that ſervice, would chiefly beg from the higher Academy, that teaching, abundance of that Spirit, to thoſe imployed in that work, that might make them able Miniſters of the New *Teſtament*. Deut. 32.

Oh! it is an ineſtimable bleſſing to have the ſaving Light of the Goſpel ſhining clear in the faithful and powerful Miniſtry of it: they thought ſo, that ſaid of their worthy Teacher, *they had rather for them the Sun ſhould not ſhine, than he ſhould not teach.* [*Satius ſolem non lucere quam Chryſoſtomum non docere.*]

2. The perſon exhorting: *I a compresbyter*, or *fellow-elder* with you. The duty of mutual exhorting, lies on each Chriſtian to another, little known amongſt the greateſt part: but truly Paſtors would be as in other duties, ſo in this eminent, and exemplary in their intercourſes and converſe, ſaying often one to another: Oh! let us remember to what we are called; to how

high and heavy a charge? to what holineſs and diligence? How great the hazard of our miſcarriage, and how great the reward of our fidelity is, whetting and ſharpening one another by thoſe weighty and holy conſiderations.

And as a Witneſs of the ſuffering of Chriſt.] He did indeed give witneſs to Chriſt by ſuffering for him the hatred and perſecutions of the World in the publiſhing of the Goſpel, and ſo was a witneſs and Martyr before the time that he was put to death: and this I exclude not, but that which is more particularly here intended is, his certain knowledge of the ſufferings of Chriſt, in his own perſon, as an eye witneſs of them, and upon that knowledge a publiſher of them, *Luke.* 24. 48. And thus theſe two ſuit with the two motives, bearing home the exhortation. The one couch't in that, *the flock of God*, v. 2. His purchaſe with thoſe his ſufferings, whereof I was an eye witneſs. And the other of *a Crown*, v. 4. I may ſpeak the more confidently of that, for I am one of thoſe that have real intereſt in it, and firm belief of it, *a partaker of the glory that ſhall be revealed.*

And theſe indeed are the things that give weight to a Man's words, make them powerful, and preſſing. *A witneſs of the ſuffering of Chriſt.* The Apoſtles had a ſingular advantage in this that were αὐτόπται, *eye witneſſes*, and St. *Paul* that wanted that, had it ſupplyed by a viſion of Chriſt, in his converſion. But certainly a ſpiritual view of Chriſt crucified is generally (I will not ſay abſolutely) neceſſary to make a Miniſter of Chriſt, but certainly very requiſite for the due witneſſing of him, and opening up the excellency and vertue of his ſufferings, ſo to preach the Goſpel that there needs no other crucifix after ſo clear and lively

lively a way as that; it may in ſome meaſure ſuit the Apoſtles Word, *Gal.* 3. 1. *Before whoſe eyes Jeſus Chriſt hath been evidently ſet forth, crucified among you.*

Men commonly read, and hear, and may poſſibly preach of the ſufferings of Chriſt as a common ſtory, and that way it may a little move a Man, and wring tears from his eyes; but faith hath another kind of ſight of them, and ſo works other kind of affections, and without that, the very eye ſight of them, availed the Apoſtles nothing: for how many ſaw him ſuffer as they did, that reviled, or at leaſt deſpiſed him. But by the eye of faith to ſee the only begotten Son of God, as ſtricken, and ſmitten of God, bearing our ſorrows, and wounded for our tranſgreſſion, Jeſus Chriſt the righteous reckoned amongſt the unrighteous and malefactors, to ſee him ſtript naked, and ſcourged, and buffetted, and nailed, and dying, and all for us; this is the thing that will bind upon us moſt ſtrongly all the duties of Chriſtianity, and of our Callings, and beſt enables us, according to our Callings, to bind them upon others. But our ſlender view of theſe things makes light ſenſe, and that cold incitements to anſwerable duty; certainly, deep impreſſion would cauſe lively expreſſion.

Would we willingly ſtir up our own hearts, and one another to holy diligence in our Station, ſtudy Chriſt as ſuffering, and dying, more thoroughly, that is the very life of the Goſpel and of our Souls, 'tis all we have to learn, and all we have to teach and preſs on you, *I determined to know nothing among you ſave Jeſus Chriſt and him crucified.* To make Chriſt's Croſs the ſum of all my learning.

Of the glory that ſhall be revealed.] As a wit-

neſs of thoſe ſufferings, ſo a partaker of the glory purchaſt by theſe ſufferings, and therefore as one inſighted and intereſſed in what he ſpeaks, the Apoſtle might fitly ſpeak of that peculiar duty which theſe ſufferings and glory do peculiarly perſwade. This the only way of ſpeaking of thoſe things, not as a Diſcourſer or contemplative Student, but a partaker; there is another force of a Paſtors exhortation either to his people or his brethren, that brings his meſſage written upon his own heart, ſpeaks of the guilt of ſin and ſufferings of Chriſt for it, as particularly feeling his own guilt, and looking on theſe ſufferings as taking it away, ſpeaks of free grace, as one that either hath drunken of the refreſhing ſtreams of it, or at leaſt, is earneſtly thirſting after it, of the love of Chriſt from a heart kindled with it, of the glory to come as one that looks to be ſharer in it, and longs earneſtly for it, that hath all his joy and content laid up in the hopes of it.

And thus Chriſtians one with another in their mutual exhortings and comfortings, all is cold and dead that flows not from ſome inward perſwaſion and experimental knowledge of divine things; that gives edge, and ſweetneſs to Chriſtian conference. To be ſpeaking of Jeſus Chriſt, not only as a King and as Redeemer, but their King, and their Redeemer, *Davids* ſtile, *my King, and my God*: and of his ſufferings as theirs, applyed by faith, and acquitting them in St. *Pauls* ſtile, *who loved me, and gave himſelf for me*. Of the glory to come as their Inheritance, they are partakers of it, their home, as ſtrangers meeting together abroad, in ſome foreign Country, delighting to ſpeak of their own Land, and their parentage, friends, and their rich patrimony there abiding

Peregrinus in terris nulla eſt jucundior recordatio quam ſuæ civitatis Aug. in Pſal. 145.

abiding them. And this ought to be the entertainment of Chriſtians when they meet. Away with triffling vain diſcourſes, cauſe all to give place to theſe refreſhing remembrances of our home. Were our hearts much on that rich Inheritance above, it would be impoſſible to refrain our tongues, and to paſs on ſo ſilent of it, to find matter of empty pratings, and be pleaſed with them, and no reliſhing this; whither go your hearts, they are out of their way, and abaſe themſelves, that turn ſo much downwards, and are not more above the Sun, eying ſtill that bleſſed Land, where our purchaſt Inheritance lies.

Inf. Oh! ſeek after more clear knowledge of this glory, and of your intereſt in it, that your hearts may rejoyce in the remembrance of it, that it be not to you as the deſcription of a pleaſant Land, ſuch as Men read in Hiſtory, and have no portion in, they like it well, and are pleaſed with it while they read, be it but ſome imagined Country or Commonwealth finely fancied. But know it to be real, no device, and ſeek to know your ſelves partakers of it.

This confidence hangs not upon a ſingular revelation, but on the power of faith, and the light of the Spirit of God which clears to his Children the things that he hath freely given them, though ſome of them, at ſometimes, it may be all or moſt of their time do want it, God ſo diſpoſing it they ſcarce clearly ſee their right, till they be in poſſeſſion; ſee not their Heaven and home till after they be at it, or hard upon it; yet truly this we may, and ought to ſeek after in humility and ſubmiſſion, that we may have the pledge

and

and earneſt of our Inheritance, not ſo much for the comfort within us, though that is allowed, as that it may wean our hearts from things below, may raiſe us to higher and cloſer Communion with God, and enable us more for his ſervice, and excite us more to his praiſes even here. What were a Chriſtian without the hope of this glory, as one ſaid, *tolle Religionem & nullus eris.* And having this hope, what are all things here to him? how poor and deſpiſeable the better and worſe of this life, and this life it ſelf, how glad is he that it will quickly end, and what were the length of it to him, but by the long continuance of his baniſhment, holden long from home, and how ſweet is the meſſage that is ſent for him to come home.

The glory to be revealed.] It is hid for preſent, wholly unknown to the Children of this World, and even but little known to the Children of God that are heirs of it, yea they that know themſelves partakers of it, yet know not much what it is, only this, that it is above all they know, or can imagine; they may ſee things that make a great ſhew here, they may hear of more than they ſee, they may think or imagine more than either they hear, or ſee, or can conceive of; ſtill they muſt think of this glory as beyond it: ſee I pompous ſhews, or read I, or hear of them; yet this I ſay of them, theſe are not as my Inheritance it is far beyond them; yea does my mind imagine things far beyond them, golden mountains and marble Palaces, yet thoſe fall ſhort of my Inheritance, for it is ſuch *as eye hath not ſeen, nor ear heard, nor hath it entred into the heart of Man to conceive.* Oh! the brightneſs of that glory when it ſhall be revealed. How ſhall they be aſtoniſht that ſhall ſee it, and not partake

partake of it? how ſhall they be filled with everla-ſting joy, that are heirs of it? were the heart much upon the thoughts of that glory, what thing is there in this periſhing World, that could either liſt it up or caſt it down?

Verſes 2, 3.

2. *Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the overſight thereof, not by conſtraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind.*

3. *Neither as being Lords over Gods heritage, but being enſamples to the flock.*

The duty.

EVery ſtep of the way of our Salvation hath on it the print of infinite majeſty, wiſdom, and goodneſs; and this amongſt the reſt, that Men, ſinful, weak Men, are made ſubſervient in that great work of bringing Chriſt and Souls to meet, that by the fooliſhneſs of preaching, (ſo appearing to carnal wiſdom) the choſen of God are called, and come in to Jeſus, and made wiſe unto Salvation, and that life, which is conveyed to them by the word of life in the hands of poor Men, is by the ſame means preſerv'd and advanc'd, and this is the ſtanding work of the miniſtry, and this the thing here bound upon them that are imployed in it, to feed the flock of God that is among them. Jeſus Chriſt he deſcended to purchaſe a Church, he aſcended

aſcended to provide and furniſh it, to ſend down his Spirit, *he aſcended and gave gifts* particularly for the work of the miniſtry, and the great uſe of them is this *to feed the flock of God*, &c.

Not to ſay any more of this uſual reſemblance of a flock, importing the weakneſs, and tenderneſs of the Church, the continual need of inſpection, and guidance, and defence, and the tender care of the chief Shepherd for theſe things, it inforces the preſent duty of ſubordinate Paſtors, their care and diligence in feeding of that flock. The due rule of diſcipline not excluded, the main is by doctrine, the wholſom and green paſtures of ſaving Truths revealed in the Goſpel, accommodating of the way teaching to their condition and capacity, and to be as much as may be particularly acquainted with it, and ſuit diligently and prudently their doctrine to it; to feed the Sheep, thoſe more advanced; to feed the Lambs, the younger and weaker; to have ſpecial care of the infirm, to learn of their Maſter the great Shepherd, to *bind up that which is broken*, and *ſtrengthen that which is ſick*, thoſe that are broken in Spirit, that are exerciſed with tentations, and gently to lead thoſe that are with young, in whom the inward work of grace is as in the conception, and they heavy and weak with the weight of it, and the many difficulties, and doubtings that are frequent companions and ſymptoms of that work. O! what dexterity and skillfullneſs, what diligence, and above all what affection and bowels of compaſſion are needful for this task? *who is ſufficient for theſe things*? who would not faint and give over in it, were not our Lord the chief Shepherd: all our ſufficiency laid up in his rich fulneſs, and all our inſufficiency covered in his gracious acceptance.

Inf.

Inf. This is the thing we have to eye, and ſtudy, to ſet him before us, and to apply our ſelves in his ſtrength to his work, not to ſeek to pleaſe, but to feed, not to delight the ears, but to feed the Souls of his people, to ſee that the food be according to his appoyntment, not empty or ſubtle notions, not light affected expreſſions, but wholſom truths, ſolid food, ſpirirual things, ſpiritually conceived and uttered, with holy underſtanding and affection.

And to conſider this, wherein lies a very preſſing motive, it is *the flock of God,* not our own to uſe as we pleaſe, but committed to our cuſtody by him, who loves highly and prizes his flock, and will require an account of us concerning it, his bought, his purchaſt flock, and at ſo dear a rate, as the Apoſtle St. *Paul* uſes this ſame conſideration in the ſame argument, *Acts.* 20. 28. *The flock of God that he hath bought with his own blood.* How reaſonable is it that we beſtow our ſtrength and life on that flock, that our Lord laid down his life for, that we be moſt ready to draw out our Spirits for them, for whom he let out his blood? *Had I,* ſays that holy Man, *ſome of that blood poured forth on the Croſs, how carefully would I carry it, and ought I not to be as careful of thoſe Souls that it was ſhed for.* Oh! that price that was paid for Souls, that he that was no fooliſh Merchant, but wiſdom it ſelf, gave for them, were that prize more in our eyes, and more in yours, nothing would ſo much take either you or us, as the matter of our Souls; in this would our deſires and endeavours meet, we to uſe, and you to improve the means of ſaving your precious Souls. Bern. Advent. Serm. 3.

Inf. 2. This mainly concerns us indeed that have charge of many, eſpecially finding the right cure of one Soul within us ſo hard; but you are concerned in

it each for one, at leaſt remember this is the end of the Miniſtry, that you may be brought unto Chriſt, that you may be led to the ſweet paſtures and pleaſant ſtreams of the Goſpel, that you may be ſpiritually fed, and may grow in that heavenly life, which is here begun in all theſe, in whom it ſhall hereafter be perfected.

And as we ought in preaching, ſo you in hearing, to propound this end to your ſelves, that you may be ſpiritually refreſht, and walk in the ſtrength of that divine nouriſhment. Is this your purpoſe when you come hither? enquire of your own hearts, and ſee what you ſeek, and what you find in the publick Ordinances of God's Houſe; certainly the moſt do not ſo much as think on the due intendment of them, aim at no end, and therefore can attain none, ſeek nothing but ſit out their hour, aſleep or awake, as it may be, or poſſibly ſome ſeek to be delighted for the time as the Lord tells the Prophet, *to hear as it were a pleaſant Song*; if the gifts and ſtrain of the ſpeaker be any thing pleaſing, or be it to gain ſome new notions, to add ſomewhat to their ſtock of knowledge, either that they may be enabled for diſcourſe, or ſimply that they may know; ſome it may be go a little further like to be ſtir'd and mov'd for the time, and to have ſome touch of good affection kindled in them, but this for a while till their other thoughts and affairs get in, and ſmother and quench it; and are not careful to blow it up and improve it; how many when they have been a little affected with the word, go out and fall into other diſcourſes and thoughts, and either take in their affairs ſecretly as it were under their cloak, and their hearts keep a conference with them, or if they forbear this, yet as ſoon as they go out plunge themſelves over head and

and ears in the World and loſe all that might have any way advantaged their ſpiritual condition; it may be one will ſay, 'twas a good Sermon; is that to the purpoſe: but what think you it hath for your praiſe or diſpraiſe, inſtead of ſaying, Oh! how well was that ſpoken, you ſhould ſay, Oh! how hard is repentance, how ſweet a thing is faith, how excellent the love of Jeſus Chriſt. That were your beſt and realleſt commending of the Sermon, with true benefit to your ſelves.

If ſome of you be careful of repenting, yet reſt not on that, if you be able to ſpeak of it afterwards upon occaſion, there is ſomewhat beſide and beyond this to evidence that you are indeed fed by the Word as the flock of God. As Sheep, (you know) their paſture, which they fed on, nor no other creatures food, appears not in the ſame faſhion upon them, not in graſs, but in growth of fleſh and fleece; thus the Word would appear feeding you, not by the bear diſcourſing of the word over again, but by the temper of your Spirits and actions, that in them you really grow more Spiritual, that humility, and ſelf denial, and charity, and holineſs are increaſed in you by it, otherways whatſoeves literal knowledge you attain, it avails you nothing, though you heard many Sermons every day, and attained further light by them, and carried a plauſible profeſſion of Religion, yet unleſs by the Goſpel you be transformed into the likeneſs of Chriſt, and grace be indeed growing in you, you are but as one ſays, of the cypreſs trees, fair and tall, but fruitleſs. Epiſtet. Καλοὶ μὲν ὕψηλοι μὲν καρπὸν δὲ οὐκ ἔχουσι

Are you not grieved and afraid, or may not many of you be ſo, that have lived many years under a fruitful miniſtry, and yet are as earthly and ſelfiſh, as unacquainted with God, and his ways, as at the firſt?

Consider this, that as the neglect of Souls will lie heavy on unholy or undiligent Ministers, so a great many Souls are ruining themselves under some measure of fit means, and so the slighting of those means will make their condition far heavier than that of many others; Remember our Saviours word, *Matth.* 11. *Woe to thee Capernaum*, &c.

2. *The due qualification of the duty.*

The discharge of this high task we have here duly qualify'd, the Apostle expresses the upright way of it, both negatively and positively.

There be three Evils the Apostle would remove from this work *Constrainedness*, *Covetousness*, and *Ambition*. *Constrainedness*, μὴ ἀναγαστῶς, either driven to the work by necessity, indigence, and want of other means of subsistence, as it is with too many, making a trade of it to live by, and setting to it as to any other calling for that end, yea making it the refuge and forlorn recourse of their insufficiency for other callings. And as not to undertake the work, driven to it by that hard weapon of necessity, so being engag'd in it, not to discharge the duties of it meerly upon necessity, because of fines binding to it, and for fear of censure; this is a violent forc't motion, and cannot but be both very unpleasant and unprofitable, as to the proper end and profiting of this work. And as the principle of the motion in this service should not be a compelling necessity of any kind, but true willingness of heart, so this willingness should not arise from any other but pure affection to the work; not for *filthy gain*, but purely from the inward bent of the mind. As it should not be a compulsive or violent motion by necessity from without, so it should not be an artificial motion by weights hung on within, avarice, love of gain, the former were a wheel driven or drawn, going by force, the latter little

tle better as a Clock made go by art, by paces hung to it. But a natural motion, as that of the heavens in their course, a willing obedience to the Spirit of God within moving a Man in every part of this holy work, that's προθυμὼς, his mind carried to it as the thing he delights in, loves to be exercised in it. There may be in a faithful Pastor very great reluctances in ingaging and adhereing to the work, upon a sense of the excellency of it, and his unfitness, and the deep apprehension of those high interests, the glory of God, and the Salvation of Souls: and yet he enter into it and continues in it, with this readiness of mind too, that is with most single and earnest desires of doing all he can for God, and the flock of God, only grieved that there is in him so little suitableness of heart, so little holiness and acquaintance with God for enabling him to it, but might he find that, he were satisfied, and in attendance upon that goes on, and waits and is doing according to his little skill, and strength, and cannot leave it, is constrained indeed, but all the constraint is that of *love to Jesus*, and for his sake to the Souls he hath bought, and all the gain sought is to gain Souls to Christ; which is far different from the constraint and that gain here discharged, yea is indeed that very willingness and readiness of mind which is opposed to that other constraint; this without, this within, that other gain is base filthy gain, this noble and divine.

Timothy careth γνησίως *not artificially but naturally.* *Phil.* 21. 20.

2 *Cor.* 5. 2.

αἰσχροκέρδος.

Inf. 1. Far be it from us, that necessity and constraint be the thing that moves us in so holy a work. The Lord whom we serve sees into the heart, and if he find not that primely moving, accounts all our diligence nothing. And let not base earth be within the cause of our willingness; but a mind toucht with Heaven It is true the tentations of earth with us in matter o

gain

Gain are not great; but yet the heart may cleave to them, as much as if they were much greater; and if it do cleave to them they ſhall ruin us: as well a poor ſtipend and glebe, if the affection be upon them, as a great Deanry or Biſhoprick; if a Man fall into it, he may drown in a ſmall brook being under water, as well as in the great Ocean. Oh! the little time that remains, let us joyn our deſires and endeavours in this work, bend our ſtrength to him, that we may have joy in that day of reckoning.

And indeed there is nothing moves us aright, nor ſhall we ever find comfort in this ſervice, unleſs it be from a cheerful inward readineſs of mind, and that from the love of Chriſt, thus ſaid he to his Apoſtle, *loveſt thou me, then feed my Sheep and feed my Lambs*, love to Chriſt begets love to his peoples Souls, that are ſo precious to him, and a care of feeding them; he devolves the working of love towards him upon his flock for their good, puts them in his room, to receive the benefit of our ſervices, which cannot reach him in himſelf, he can receive no other profit from it. It is love, much love gives much unwearied care, and much skill in this charge. How ſweet is it to him that loves, to beſtow himſelf, to ſpend and be ſpent upon his ſervice whom he loves. *Jacob* in the ſame kind of ſervice endured all, and found it light by reaſon of love, the cold of the nights, and the heat of the days, ſeven years for his *Rachel, and they ſeemed to him but a few days, becauſe he loved her.*

Love is the great endowment of a Shepherd of Chriſts flock. He ſays not to *Peter*, art thou wiſe or learned or eloquent, but *loveſt thou me, then feed my Sheep.*

The third evil is *ambition*, and that is either in the the affecting of undue authority; or the overſtraining, and tyrannical

tyrannical abuſe of due authority ; or to ſeek theſe dignities that ſuit not with this charge, which is not *Dominium*, but *Miniſterium*. Therefore diſcharg'd *Luke* 22. There is a miniſterial authority to be uſed in diſcipline, and more ſharpneſs with ſome than others, but ſtill lowlineſs and moderation predominant, and not domineering with rigour ; rather being examples to them in all holineſs and eſpecially in humility and meekneſs, wherein our Lord Jeſus particularly propounds his own example.

But being enſamples.] Such a pattern as they may ſtamp and print their Spirits and carriage by, and be followers of you as you are of Chriſt ; and without this, there is little or no fruitful teaching. Well ſays one, *either teach not, or teach by living*, ſo the Apoſtle exhorteth *Timothy* to be an *example in word*, but withal *in converſation*, that is τύπος, the beſt printed copy. *Naz.* 1 *Tim.* 4. 12.

But this pares off, will ſome think, all encouragements of learning. No advantage, no reſpect, nor authority. Oh! no, it removes poor worthleſs encouragements out of the way, to make place for one great one that is ſufficient, which all the other together are not, that is,

Ver.

Verſe 4.

And when the chief Shepherd ſhall appear, ye ſhall receive a Crown of Glory that fadeth not away.

3 *The advantage.*

THou ſhalt looſe nothing by all that reſtraint from baſe gain, and vain glory, and Worldly power. No matter, let them go for a Crown, that weighs them all down, that ſhall abide for ever. Oh! how far excellent! A Crown of Glory, pure unmixt glory without any ingrediency of pride or ſinful vanity, or any danger of it. And a Crown that fadeth not, of ſuch a flower as withers not, not a temporary garland of fading flowers, ſuch as all here are? *Wo to the Crown of pride*, Iſa. 28. 1. Though it is made of flowers growing in a fat valley, yet their glorious beauty is a fading flower, but this freſh, and in perfect luſtre to all eternity. May they not well trample on baſe gain and vain applauſe, that have this Crown to look to. They that will be content with thoſe, let them be doing, but *they have their reward*, and its done and gone, when faithful followers are to receive theirs. Joys of royal pomp, marriages and feaſts how ſoon do they vaniſh as a dream; that of *Ahazveraſh*, that laſted about half a year but then ended, and how many ſince that gone and forgot. But this day begins a triumph and a feaſt that ſhall never either be ended or be wearied of, ſtill freſh new delights, all things here, the choiceſt pleaſures

ſures, cloy, but ſatisfie not. Thoſe above ſhall always ſatisfie and never cloy. When the chief Shepherd ſhall appear, and that ſhortly, this moment will ſhortly be out.

What is to be refuſed in the way to this Crown? all labour ſweet for it. And what is there here to be deſired to ſtay your hearts, that we ſhould not moſt willingly let go, to reſt from our labours and receive our Crown? Was ever any man ſad that the day of his Coronation drew nigh? no envy, nor jealouſies, all Kings, each his Crown, and each rejoycing in the glory of another, and all in his, who that day ſhall be *all in all.*

Verſe 5.

5. *Likewiſe ye younger, ſubmit your ſelves unto the elder: yea, all of you be ſubject one to another, and be clothed with humility; for God reſiſteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble:*

SIN hath diſordered all, nothing to be found but diſtemper and crookedneſs in the condition and ways of Men towards God, and one towards another, till a new Spirit come in and rectifie all: and very much of that redreſs lies in this particular grace of *humility*, here recommended by the Apoſtle.

That regulates the carriage of the younger towards the elder. (1.) Of all Men, one to another. (2.) Towards God.

1. The younger to be ſubject to the elder. Which I take ſo of difference of years, that it hath ſome aſpect to the relation of thoſe that are under the diſcipline and government of the *Elders*, who though not always ſo in years, however ought to ſuit that name in exemplary gravity and wiſdom. It is no Seignory but a Miniſtry; yet there is a ſacred authority in it rightly carried, that both duely challenges and effectually commands that reſpect and obedience which is fit for the right order and government of the Houſe of God.

πρεσβύτεροι.

The Spirit of Chriſt in his Miniſters is the thing that makes them truly Elders, and truly worthy of double honour, and without that, Men may hunt reſpect and credit by other parts, and the more they follow it, the faſter it flies from them; or if they catch any thing of it they only grip but a ſhadow.

Inf. Learn, you my Brethren, that obedience due to the diſcipline of Gods Houſe. This is all we plead for in this point. And know, if you refuſe it, and deſpiſe the Ordinance of God, he will reſent the indignity as done to him. And Oh! that all, that have that charge of his Houſe upon them, would mind his intereſt wholly, and not riſe in conceit of their power, but wholly imploy and improve it for their Lord and Maſter, and look on no reſpect to themſelves, as for themſelves deſirable, but only ſo far as is needful for the profitable diſcharge and advance of his work in their hands. What are differences and regards of Men, how empty a vapour? and whatſoever it is, nothing loſt by ſingle and entire love of our Lord's glory, and total aiming at that. *Them that honour him, he will honour, and thoſe that deſpiſe him ſhall be deſpiſed.*

But though this (*likewiſe*) implies, I conceive, ſomewhat

ſomewhat in it relative to the former ſubject, yet certainly 'tis more extended in its full intendment, and directs, touching the difference of years, the *Subjection* that is, reſpect and reverence, due from younger to elder perſons.

The preſumption and unbridledneſs of youth requires the preſſing and binding on of this rule. And it is of undeniable equity, even written in nature, due to Aged perſons, but doubtleſs thoſe reap this due fruit in that ſeaſon the moſt, that have ripened it moſt by the influence of their grave and holy carriage: 'tis indeed a Crown, but when? when found in the way of righteouſneſs; there it ſhines, and hath a kind of royalty over youth; otherwiſe a graceleſs old age is a moſt deſpicable and lamentable ſight. What gains an unholy old Man or Woman, by their ſcores of years, but the more ſcores of guiltineſs and miſery? and their white hairs ſpeak nothing but ripeneſs for wrath. Oh! *to be as a tree planted in the Houſe of the Lord bringing forth fruit in old age*; much experience in the ways of God, and much diſdain of the World, and much deſire of the love of God, heavenly temper of mind, and frame of life; this is the advantage of many years; but to have ſeen and felt the more miſery, and heapt up the more ſin, the greateſt boundle of it againſt the day of wrath, a woful treaſure of it, threeſcore or threeſcore and ten years a gathering, and with ſo much increaſe every Day, no vacancy, no dead years, no, not a Day wherein it was not growing. Pſ. 92. 12, 13.

A ſad reflection to look back, what have I done for God? and find nothing, but ſuch a world of ſin committed againſt him, how much better he that gets home betimes in his youth, if once delivered from ſin and death, at one with God, and ſome way ſerviceable to

him, or desiring to be, and hath a quick voyage, having lived much in a little time.

All of you be subject one to another.] This yet further dilates the duty, makes it universally mutual, one subject to another. This turns just about the vain contest of Men, that arises from the natural mischief of of self-love, every one would carry it and be best, and highest. The very Company of Christ, and his exemplary lowliness, and the meanness of himself, and those his followers; all these did not bar out this frothy foolish question, *who should be greatest*, and so far disputed as into a heat about it, *a strife amongst them.* Now this rule is just opposite, each strive to be lowest, *subject one to another.*

This doth not annul either Civil or Church Government, nor those differences that are grounded upon the Law of Nature, or of Civil Society; for we see immediately before such differences allowed, and the particular duties of them recommended, but those only, that all due respect, according to their Station, be given by each Christian to another, and though there cannot be such a subjection of Masters or Parents to their Servants and Children, as is due to them from these, yet a lowly meek carrying of of their authority, a tender respect of their youth, receiving of an admonition from them duly qualify'd, is that which suits with the rule. And generally not delighting in the trampling on, or abusing of any, but rather seeking the credit and good esteem of all as our own. Taking notice of that good in them, wherein
Rom. 12. they are beyond us: for all hath some advantage and none hath all. And in a word, and 'tis that of St. *Paul*, like this of our Apostle here, let this be all the strife, who shall put most respect each on another, according

cording to the capacity, and ſtation of each one, in giving honour, go each one before another.

Now that ſuch carriage may be ſincere, no empty compliment or court holy water (as they ſpeak) but a part of the ſolid holineſs of a Chriſtian; the Apoſtle requires the true principle of ſuch deportment, the grace of *humility*: That a Chriſtian put on that, not as the appearance of it, to act in as a ſtage garment, but the truth of it, as their conſtant habit, *be ye clothed with humility*. It muſt appear in your outward carriage; ſo the reſemblance of clothing imports; but let it appear, as really it is, ſo the very name of it appears, 'tis not ταπεινοφανία but ταπεινοφροσύνη. Not a *ſhew of humility*, but heart lowneſs, *humility of mind*.

As it is the bent of humility, to hide other graces, ſo far as piety to God, and our Brethren will permit, ſo it would willingly hide it ſelf, loves not to appear, but as neceſſity urges: appear it muſt, and doth ſomewhat more appear than many other graces do, though it ſeeks not to appear: it is ſeen as a modeſt Man or Womans Apparrel, which they wear not for that end, that it may be ſeen, and do not gaudily flaunt and delight in dreſſing; though there is a decency as well as neceſſity, which they do, and may have reſpect to; yet that in ſo neat and unaffected way, that they are a good example even in that point. Thus humility in carriage and words is as the *decorum* of this clothing, but the main is the real uſefulneſs of it.

And therefore a truly humble Man deſires not much to appear humble, yea were it not for diſedifying his Brethren, he would rather diſguiſe and hide, not only

other

other things by humility, but even humility it ſelf, and would be content upon miſtake of ſome words or geſtures to paſs for proud and vain, being humble within rather than to be big in his own eyes, under a ſemblance of outward lowlineſs. Yea were it not that Charity and Piety do both forbid it, would not care to do ſome things on purpoſe that might ſeem arrogant, to carry humility unſeen that doth ſo naturally delight in covering of all graces, and is ſorry that it cannot do ſo without being ſeen it ſelf, as that garment that covers the reſt muſt of neceſſity be ſeen it ſelf. But ſeeing it muſt be ſo, 'tis with the leaſt ſhew that may be, as a dark veil caſt about rich attire hides their ſhew, and makes very little it ſelf.

This therefore is the main, that the ſeat of humility be the heart, although it will be ſeen in the carriage, yet as little as it can, as few words as may be concerning it ſelf; and theſe it doth ſpeak, that they be the real thoughts of the mind, and be not an affected voice of it differing from the inward ſenſe, otherwiſe humble ſpeech and carriage only put on without, and not faſtened in the inſide, is the moſt refined, and ſubtle, and indeed the moſt dangerous kind of pride. And this I would recommend as a ſafe way, ever let thy thoughts concerning thy ſelf be below what thou uttereſt; and what thou ſeeſt needful or fitting to ſay to thy own abaſement, be not only content (which moſt are not) to be taken at thy word, and believed to be ſuch by them that hear thee; but be deſirous of it, and let that be the end of thy ſpeech, to perſwade them and gain it of them, that they really take thee for as worthleſs and mean as thou doſt expreſs thy ſelf.

Laſ. But how little are we acquainted with the real frame

frame of Chriſtianity; the moſt living without a rule, not laying it to their words and ways at all, nor yeilding a ſeeming obedience to the Goſpel; others take up a kind of Profeſſion, and think all conſiſts in ſome religious performances, and do not ſtudy the inward reſerve of their heart-evils, to have that Temple purged; for ſo it ſhould be, and ſtand in much need of a ſweeping out of filthineſs, and puting out of idols. Some there be that are much buſied about the matter of their aſſurance, ſtill upon that point, which is lawful indeed, and laudible to enquire after, yet not ſo, as to neglect things more needful. It were certainly better for many, when they find no iſſue that way, to turn ſomewhat of their diligence to the ſtudy of Chriſtian Graces and Duties in their Station, and to task themſelves for a time, were it to the more ſpecial ſeeking of ſome one Grace, and then of another, as meekneſs, and patience, and this particularly of Humility. To be truly heart-humble; many men deſpiſe it in others, but ſome that will commend it in the general, or in ſome of thoſe in whom they behold it; yet, ſeek not to put it on themſelves, love to be more gay, and ſeem to be ſomebody, and not abaſe themſelves, 'tis the way, ſay they, to be undone: This clothing is too poor a ſtuff and ſad a colour for them. Oh, my Brethren, you know not the excellency of it, ye look out at a diſtance and judge according to your light vain minds: But will you ſee it by the light of the Word, and then you ſhall perceive much hidden richneſs and comelineſs in it? and not only upon thoſe that approve it and call it comely, but put it on, and ſo it is moſt comely; and as all Graces, ſo particularly this cloathing of Humility, though it make leaſt ſhew, yet come near and you will ſee it

both

both rich and comely; and though it hides other Graces, yet when they do appear under it, as ſometimes they will, a little glance of them, ſo makes them much more eſteemed. *Rebekah*'s Beauty and her Jewels were covered with a Veil; but when they did appear the Veil ſet them off, and commended them, though at a diſtance it hid them.

2. In all, ſo particularly in this Grace, take heed of a diſguiſe or counterfeit of it; Oh! ſincerity in all, and particularly in this, only low in thine own eyes, and willing to be ſo in the eyes of others; that is the very upright nature of this heart-humility.

1. Not deluded with falſe conceit of advantages thou haſt not. 2. Not ſwell'd with a vain conceit of thoſe thou really haſt. 3. Not affecting to be eſteemed by others, either upon their imagining ſome good that is not in thee, or diſcerning that which is. Is not the day at hand when men will be taken off their falſe hights they ſtand on, and ſet on their own feet, and when all the eſteem of others ſhall vaniſh and paſs like ſmoak, and thou ſhall be juſt what God finds and accounts thee, and neither more or leſs. Oh! the remembrance of that day of true eſtimate of all; this would make men hing leſs upon the unſtable conceits and opinions of one another; knowing our Judgment and Day ſhall ſhortly end, a ſhort day. Be it little or much thou haſt, the lower and cloſer thou carrieſt it under this cloak, the ſafer ſhall it and thou be, the more ſhall it increaſe, and thou be the liker him in whom all the fullneſs dwells; in this he hath moſt expreſly ſet himſelf before us, as our pattern, and one ſays well. *Sure man might now be conſtrained to be proud, for whom God himſelf became humble.*

Now

Now to work the heart to a humble poſture. (1.) Look into thy ſelf in earneſt, and truly, whoſoever thou be that haſt the higheſt conceit and the higheſt cauſes of it; that will do it, a real ſight of thy ſelf, it will lay thy creſt. Men look on any good, or fancy of it in themſelves with both eyes, and skip over as unpleaſant their real defects and deformities; every man is naturally his own flatterer, otherwiſe flatteries and falſe cryings up from others would take little impreſſion, but that they meet with the ſame conceit within. But will any man ſee his ignorance, and lay what he knows not over againſt what he knows; the diſorders in his heart and affections over againſt any right motion in them, his ſecret follies and ſins againſt his outwardly blameleſs carriage; and this man ſhall not readily love and embrace himſelf, yea it ſhall be impoſſible for him not to abaſe and abhors himſelf? (2.) Look on the good in others, and the evil in thy ſelf, make that the parallel, and then thou wilt walk humbly. Moſt men do juſt the contrary, and that fooliſh and unjuſt compariſon puffes them up. (3.) Thou art not required to be ignorant of that good which really is indeed; but beware of imagining what is not; yea, rather let ſomething that is paſs thy view, and ſee it within, rather than beyond its true ſize, and then whatſoever it is, ſee it not as thine own but Gods, his free gift, and ſo the more thou haſt, looking on it in that view, thou wilt certainly be the more humble, as having the more engagement; the weight of them will preſs thee, down and low, ſtill the lower, as you ſee it in *Abraham*, the clear Viſions and Promiſes he had, made him fall down flat to the Ground. (4.) Pray much for the Spirit of Humility, the Spirit of Chriſt, for that is it; otherwiſe all thy vileneſs

will not humble thee when men hear of this or other Graces, and how reasonable they are, they think presently to have it, and do not consider the natural enmity and rebellion of their own hearts, and the necessity of receiving those from Heaven, and therefore in the use of all other means, to be most dependant on that influence, and most in that means, which opens the heart most to that influence, and draws it down upon the heart, and that is Prayer.

Of all the evils of our corrupt nature there is none more connatural and universal than Pride; the grand wickedness, self-exalting in our own and others opinion. Though I will not contest what was the first step in that complicated first sin, yet certainly, this of pride was one, a main ingredient in it, that which the unbelief conceived going before, and the disobedience following after were both servants to; and ever since it sticks still deep in our nature. And St. *Augustine* says truly, *That, that first overcame man, is the last he overcomes.* Some sins comparatively may die before us, but this hath life in it sensibly as long as we; is as the heart of all, the first living, and the last dying, and hath this advantage that whereas other sins are fomented by one another, this feeds even on Vertues and Graces, as a Moth that breeds in them, and consumes them even in the finest of them, if it be not carefully lookt to. This *Hydra*, as one head of it is cut off, another rises up: It will secretly cleave to the best actions, and prey upon them: and therefore so much need that we continually watch, and fight, and pray against it, and be restless in the pursuit, daily seeking to gain further in real and deep humiliation; to be nothing, and desire to be nothing, not only bear, but to love our own abasement.

ment, and the things that procure and help it, to take pleaſure in them ſo far as may be without ſin, yea, even of our ſinful failings when they are diſcovered, to love the bringing low of our ſelves by them, while we hate and grieve for the ſin of them.

And above all to watch our ſelves in our beſt things, that ſelf get not in, or if it break in, or ſteal in at any time, that it be preſently found out and caſt out again; to have that eſtabliſht within us to do all for God, to intend him and his glory in all, and to be willing to advance his glory were it by our own diſgrace; not to make raiſing or pleaſing thy ſelf the rule of exerciſing thy parts and graces, when to uſe and bring them forth; but the good of thy Brethren, and in that the glory of thy Lord: Now this is indeed to be ſevered from ſelf, and united to him, to have ſelf-love turned into the love of God; and this is his own work, it is above all other hands, therefore the main combat againſt pride and conqueſt of it, and gaining of humility is certainly by prayer. God beſtows himſelf moſt to them that are moſt abundant in prayer, and to whom he ſhews himſelf moſt, they are certainly the moſt humble.

Now to ſtir us up to diligence for this grace, take briefly a conſideration or two.

1. Look on that above pointed at. The high example of lowlineſs ſet before us, Jeſus Chriſt requiring our particular care to take this leſſon from him: and is it not moſt reaſonable? he the moſt fair, the moſt excellent and compleat of all men, and yet the moſt humble; he more than a man, and yet willingly became in ſome ſort leſs than a man, as it is expreſt, a Worm and no Man; and when Majeſty it ſelf emptied it ſelf and deſcended ſo low, ſhall a Worm ſwell and be high conceited.

Then conſider, it was for us, all his humbling to expiate our pride, and therefore the more juſt that we follow a pattern which is both ſo great in it ſelf, and ſo nearly concerning us. *O humility! the vertue of Chriſt*, that which he ſo peculiarly eſpouſed, *how doſt thou confound the vanity of our pride?*

2. Conſider the ſafety of Grace under this cloathing, it is that which keeps it unexpoſed to a thouſand hazards. Humility doth Grace no prejudice in covering it, but indeed ſhelters it from violence and wrong. Therefore they do juſtly call it *conſervatrix virtutum*, the preſerver of Grace, and one ſays well, *That he that carries other graces without humility, carries a precious powder in the wind without a cover.*

3. Conſider, The increaſe of Grace by it, and that is here expreſt; the perfect enmity againſt pride, and bounty toward humility, *he reſiſteth the proud, and giveth Grace to the humble.*

He reſiſteth.] Singles it out for his grand enemy, and ſets himſelf in battel againſt it, ſo the word is, it breaks the ranks of men in which he hath ſet them when they are not ſubject, ὑποτασσόμενοι, as the word is before; yea, it not only breaks rank, but riſes up in Rebellion againſt him, and doth what it can to dethrone him and uſurp his place, therefore he orders his forces againſt it, and to be ſure, if God be able to make his party good, pride ſhall not eſcape ruin, he will break it and bring it low; for he is ſet upon that purpoſe, and will not be diverted.

But he giveth grace.] Pours out plentifully upon humble hearts; his ſweet dews and ſhowers ſlide off the Mountains and fall on the low Valley of humble hearts, and make them pleaſant and fertile. The ſwelling heart puft up with a fancy of fullneſs hath no room.

room for Grace, is lift up, is not hollow'd and fitted to receive and contain the graces that deſcend from above; and again as the humble heart is moſt capable, as emptied and hollowed, can hold moſt, ſo it is moſt thankful, acknowledges all as received, but the proud cries all his own; the return of Glory that is due from Grace, comes moſt freely and plentifully from an humble heart, and he delights to enrich it with Grace, and it delights to return him Glory, the more he beſtows on it, the more it deſires to honour him withal, and the more it doth ſo, the more readily he beſtows ſtill more upon it, and this is the ſweet intercourſe betwixt God and the humble Soul; this is the noble ambition of humility, in reſpect whereof all the aſpirings of pride are low and baſe: when all is reckoned, the lowlieſt mind is truly the higheſt; and theſe two agree ſo well, that the more lowly it is, 'tis thus the higher, and the higher thus, it is ſtill the more lowly.

Oh! my Brethren, want of this is a great cauſe of all our wants; why ſhould our God beſtow on us, what we would beſtow on our idol-ſelf, or if not to idolize thy ſelf, yet to idolize the thing, the gift that grace beſtowed; to fetch thy believing, and comforts from that, which is to put it in his place that gave, and to make *Baal* of it, as may be read, *Hoſea* 2. 8. Now he will not furniſh thee thus to his own prejudice therein; ſeek to have thine heart on a high deſign, ſeeking Grace ſtill not to reſt in any gift, nor to grow vain and regardleſs of him upon it. If we had but this fixed with us; what gift or grace I ſeek, what comfort I ſeek, it ſhall no ſooner be mine, but it ſhall all be thine again, and my ſelf with it; I deſire nothing from thee but that it may come back to thee, and draw me with it unto thee, this is all my end, and

all

all my desire : The thing thus presented would not come back so often unanswered.

This is the only way to grow quickly rich, come still poor to him that hath enough, ever to enrich thee, and desire of his riches not for thy self, but for him, mind entirely his Glory in all thou hast and seekest to have ; what thou hast use so, and what thou wantest vow it so, let it be his in thy purpose, even before it be thine in possession, as *Hanna* did in her suit, 1 *Sam.* 1. 11. for a Son, and thou shalt obtain as she did, and then as she was, be thou faithful in the performance : *Him whom I received* (says she) *by petition, I have returned to the Lord.*

It is no question, the secret pride and selfness of our hearts that prejudges much of the bounty of his hand in the measure of our Graces, and the sweet embraces of his love, which we should otherwise find. The more we let go of our selves, still the more should we receive of himself. Oh foolish we, that refuse so blessed an exchange.

To this humility, as in these words 'tis taken in the notion of our inward thoughts touching our selves, and carriage in relation to others, the Apostle joyns the other Humility in relation to God, being indeed the different actings, one and the same Grace, and inseparably connexed each with the other.

Verse

Verſe 6.

Humble your ſelves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time.

THIS is preſt by a reaſon of equity and neceſſity, both in that word (*the mighty hand of God*) he is Sovereign Lord of all, and all things do obeiſance to him. Therefore it is juſt that you his People profeſſing Loyalty and Obedience to him be moſt ſubmiſſive, and humble in your ſubjection to him in all things. Again, the neceſſity, *his mighty hand*: There is no ſtriving; it is a vain thing to flinch and ſtruggle, for he doth what he will, and his hand is ſo mighty, that the greateſt power of the creature is nothing to it; yea, it is all indeed derived from him, and therefore cannot do any whit againſt him; if thou wilt not yield, you muſt yield, if thou will not lead, you ſhall be pulled and drawn, therefore ſubmiſſion is your only courſe.

The third reaſon is of Utility or certain Advantage, as there is nothing gain'd, yea, you are certainly ruin'd by reluctance, ſo this humble ſubmiſſion is the only way to gain your point. What would you have under any affliction, but be delivered, and raiſed up, thus alone you attain that, *humble your ſelves, and he ſhall raiſe you up in due time.*

This is the end why he humbles you, lays weights upon you, that you may be depreſt: Now when it is gained, that you are willingly ſo, then the weights are taken off, and you are lifted up by his gracious hand

land, otherwiſe it is not enough, that he hath humbled, you by his hand, unleſs you humble your ſelves under his hand, many have had great and many preſſures, one affliction after another, and been humbled, and yet not humble, as they commonly expreſs the difference: humbled by force in regard of their outward condition, but not humbled in their inward temper; and therefore as ſoon as the weight is off as heaps of Wool, they riſe up again, and grow as big as they were.

Inf. If we would conſider this in our particular trials, and aim at this deportment, it were our wiſdom; are they not mad that under any ſtroke, quarrel or ſtruggle againſt God: what gain your Children thus at your hands, but more blows? not only is this an unſeemly and unhappy way openly to reſiſt and ſtrive, but even ſecretly to fret and grumble; for he hears the leaſt whiſpering of the heart, and looks moſt how that behaves it ſelf under his hand. Oh! humble acceptance of his chaſtiſement, is our duty and our peace, that which gains moſt on the heart of our Father, and makes the rod ſooneſt fall out of his hand.

And not only would we learn this, in our outward things, but in our ſpiritual condition, as the thing the Lord is much taken with in his Children; there is a ſtubbornneſs, and freting of Heart concerning our Souls, that ariſes from pride and untamedneſs of our nature; and yet ſome take a pleaſure in it, touching the matter of comfort and aſſurance, if it be with-held, or which they take more liberty in, be it ſanctification, and victory over ſin; they ſeek, and yet find little or no ſucceſs, but the Lord holding them at under in theſe; they then vex and walk more diſcontented,

tented, and nothing pleaſes them, as peeviſh Children upon the refuſe of ſomewhat they would have, take diſpleaſure and make no account of the daily proviſion made for them, and all the other benefits they have by the care and love of their Parents: This is a folly very unbeſeeming the Children that are the Children of Wiſdom, and ſhould walk as ſuch: And till they learn more humble reſpect of their Father's Will, they are ſtill the further off from their purpoſe; were they once brought to ſubmit the matter, and give him heartily his Will, he would readily give them theirs, as far as were for their good, as you ſay to your Children of any thing they are too ſtiff and earneſt in, and keep a noiſe for, *cry not for it, and you ſhall have it.*

And this is the thing we obſerve not, that the Lord often by his delays is aiming at this, and were this done, we cannot think how graciouſly he would deal with us, his gracious deſign is to make much room for grace by much humbling, eſpecially ſome Spirits that need much trying, or that he means much enabling to, for a ſingular ſervice, and thus the time is not loſt as we think it, it furthers our end, while we think contrary; 'tis neceſſary ſpent time and pains that is given to the unballaſting of a Ship, caſting out the Earth and Sand, when it is to be loaden with Spices: we muſt be emptied more, if we would have of that fullneſs and riches that we are longing for.

So long as we ſome and chafe againſt his way, though it be in our beſt ſuits; we are not in a poſture for a favourable anſwer: would we wring things out of his hand by fretfullneſs? that is not the way, no, but preſent humble ſubmiſſive ſuits. Lord this is my deſire, but thou art wiſe and gracious, I refer the matter to

thy will for the thing, and for the meaſure, and time, and all; were we molded to this compoſure, then were mercy near, when he hath gained this, broke our will, and tamed our ſtoutneſs, then he relents and pities, See *Jer.* 30. 18.

This I would recommend in any eſtate, the humble folding under the Lord's hand, kiſſing the rod, and falling low before him: and this the way to be raiſed: but it may be one that thinks, he hath tried this a while, and is ſtill at the ſame point, hath gained nothing, and therefore falls back to his old repinings: Let ſuch a one know his humbling and compliance was not upright, it was a fit of falſe conſtrained ſubmiſſion, and therefore laſts not, it was but a tempting of him inſtead of ſubmitting to him Oh! will he have a ſubmiſſion: I will try't but with this reſerve, that if after ſuch a time I gain not what I ſeek, I ſhall think it is loſt, and that I have reaſon to return to my diſcontent; though he ſays not thus, yet this is ſecretly under it. No, but wouldſt thou have it right, it muſt be without condition, without reſerve, no time, nor nothing preſcribed; and then he will make his word good, *He will raiſe thee up*, and that

In due time.] Not thy fancied time, but his own wiſely appointed time. Thou that thinkeſt, now I am ſinking if he help not, now 'twill be too late, yet he ſees it otherways, he can let thee ſink yet lower, and yet bring thee up again; he doth but ſtay till the moſt fit time, thou canſt not ſee it yet, but thou ſhalt ſee it, that his choſen time is abſolutely beſt; *he waiteth to be gracious*; doth he wait, and will not thou? Oh! the firm belief of his Wiſdom, Power, and Goodneſs, what difficulty will it not ſurmount?

So

So then be humble under his hand; ſubmit, not only thy goods, thy health, thy life, but thy ſoul. Seek and wait for thy pardon as a condemned Rebel, with thy rope about thy neck; lay thy ſelf low before him at his feet, ſtoop and crave leave to look up and ſpeak, and ſay; *Lord, once I am juſtly under the ſentence of death; if I fall under it, thou art righteous, and I do here acknowledge it; but there is deliverance in Chriſt, thither I would have recourſe: yet if I be beaten back, and held out, and faith with-held from me, and I periſh as it were in view of ſalvation, ſee the rock, and yet cannot come at it but drown: what have I to ſay; in this likewiſe thou art righteous, only if it ſeem good unto thee to ſave the vileſt, moſt wretched of ſinners, and ſhew great mercy in pardoning ſo great debts; the higher will be the glory of that mercy: however here I am reſolved to wait till either thou graciouſly receive me, or abſolutely reject me, if thou do this I have not a word to ſay againſt it, becauſe thou art gracious, I hope; I hope yet thou wilt have mercy on me.* I dare ſay that this promiſe belongs to a Soul, and *it ſhall be raiſed up in due time.*

And what though moſt or all our life ſhould paſs without much ſenſible taſte even of ſpiritual comforts; a poor all it is: let us not over eſteem this moment, and ſo think too much of our better or worſe condition in it either in Temporals, yea, or in Spirituals, ſuch as are more arbitrary and acceſſary to the name of our Spiritual Life; providing we can humbly wait for free grace, and hang on the word of promiſe, we are ſafe; if the Lord will clearly ſhine on us, and refreſh us; this is much to be deſired and prized, but if he ſo think fit, what if we ſhould be all our days held at a diſtance, and under a cloud of wrath, it is but a moment in his anger; then follows a life time

in his favour, an endleſs life time; 'tis *but ſorrow for a night, and joy comes in the morning*, that clearer morning of Eternity, to which no evening ſucceeds.

Verſe 7.

Caſting all your care upon him, for he careth for you.

AMongſt other ſpiritual ſecrets, this is one, and a prime one, the combinement of lowlineſs and boldneſs, *humble confidence*: This the true temper of a Child of God, towards his great and good Father; nor can any other have it, but they that are indeed his Children, and have within them that Spirit of adoption, which he ſends into their hearts.

And theſe two here the Apoſtle joyns together. *Humble under the hand of God*, and yet *caſt your care on him*, upon that ſame hand under which you ought to humble your ſelves, muſt you withal caſt over your care, all your care, *for he careth for you.*

Conſider, (1.) The nature of this Confidence. (2.) The Ground of it. The Nature, *caſting all your care on him.* The ground or warrant of it; *for he careth for you.*

Every man hath ſome deſires and purpoſes that are predominant with him, beſide the daily exigences of his life, he is compaſt with; and in both according to their importance or his eſteem, and the difficulties

ficulties occurring in them, he is naturally carried to be thoughtful and careful in them. Now the exceſs and diſtemper of this care is one of the great diſeaſes and miſeries of mans life. Moral Men perceiving and reſenting it, have been tampering at the cure, and preſcribing after their faſhion, but with little ſucceſs, ſome preſent abatement and allay of the paroxiſm or extremity their rules may reach; but they never go near the bottom, the cauſe of the evil, and therefore cannot work a through ſound cure of it.

Something they have ſpoken, ſomewhat fitly, of the ſurpaſſing nature's rule, and ſize in the purſuit of ſuperfluous needleſs things, but for the unavoidable care of things needful, they knew no redreſs but to their own induſtry and diligence; they can tell how little will ſerve him, that ſeeks no more than what will ſerve; but how to be provided of the little, or to be aſſured of it, and freed from troubling care they cannot tell.

Now truly it were a great point to be well ſchooled in the former, and that which is neceſſary for the due practice of this rule here given touching neceſſary cares, firſt to cut off cares unneceſſary, to retrench all extravagant ſuperfluous deſires: for certainly a great part of the troubling cares of men are all about things that are ſuch that have no neceſſity in them, but what our diſorder'd deſires make, nor truly any real good in them, but what our fancy puts upon them: Some are indeed forc't to hard labour for their daily bread, but out of doubt a great part of the ſweat and toyl of the greateſt part of men is about unneceſſaries. Such an eſtate ſo much by the year, ſuch a place, ſo much honour, and eſteem, and rank in the World, theſe are the things that make ſome ſlaves to the

Ad ſuper vacua ſuda tur.

the humours of others, on whom they place their following and dependances for theſe ends, and thoſe poſſibly to whom they are ſo enthrall'd, are themſelves at as little liberty, but captivated to the humours of ſome others either above them, or that being below them may give acceſſion and furtherance to their ends of enrichment, or advancement, or popularity: Men ſet on theſe things forge neceſſities to themſelves, and makes vain things as neceſſary as food and rayment, reſolving that they will have them, or fall in the chaſe, willfully and unavoidably bent on them. *They that will be rich*, ſays the Apoſtle, that are reſolv'd on't upon any terms, they meet with terms hard enough of it, *they fall into temtation, and a ſnare*, and into many fooliſh and hurtful luſts, which drown men in deſtruction and perdition, no recovering, but ſtill emplunged deeper and deeper, and (fooliſh luſts) reaſonleſs, childiſh deſires after one bargain, ſuch another, and after one ſin, another to make even, and ſomewhat then to keep that whole, and ſo on, no end; if upon Purchaſe and Land, ſtill ſome Houſe or Neighbour-field, ſome *Naboths-vineyard* in their eyes, and all the reſt is nothing without that, which diſcovers the madneſs of this humour, this dropſie thirſt.

And this is firſt indeed to be lookt to, that our deſires and cares be brought to a due compaſs: and what would we have think we, contentment lies in ſo much, and no leſs when that is attained, it ſhall appear as far off as before: when Children are at the foot of a high Hill, they think it reaches the Heavens, and yet if they were there, they find themſelves as far off, as before, ſenſibly no nearer. Men think, Oh! had I this, I were well, and when it is reacht, it is but an advanced ſtance to look higher and ſpy out for ſome other thing. We

We are indeed Children in this to think the good of our eſtate is in the greatneſs, and not in the fitneſs: he were a fool that would have his cloaths ſo, and think the bigger and longer they were, they would pleaſe him the better. And certainly as in Apparel, ſo in place and eſtate, and all outward things; their good lies not in their greatneſs, but in their fitneſs for us; our Saviour tells us expreſly, that *mans life conſiſteth not in the abundance of the things he poſſeſſeth.* Luc. 12. 13. Think you great and rich perſons live more content, believe it not, if they will deal freely, they can tell you the contrary, that there is nothing but a ſhew in them; and that the great eſtates and places have great grief and cares attending them, as ſhadows are proportioned to their bodies.

And if they want real croſſes, luxury frames troubles to it ſelf, variety of diſhes corrupting the ſtomach, and cauſing variety of diſeaſes: and for need, fantaſtick vain diſcontents that will trouble men as much as greater, be it but this Hawk flies not well, or that Dog runs not well, to men whoſe hearts are in thoſe games.

So then, I ſay, this firſt to be regulated, all childiſh vain needleſs cares to be diſcharg'd, and as being unfit to caſt on thy God, quite caſt out of thy Heart, and entertain no care at all, but ſuch as thou maiſt put into God's hands, and make his on thy behalf; ſuch as he will take off thy hand, and undertake for thee.

All needful lawful care, and that only will he receive, ſo then rid thy ſelf quit of all that thou canſt not take this courſe with, and then without ſcruple take confidently this courſe with all the reſt: ſeek a well regulated ſober Spirit. In the things of this life content

with

τροφὴν ὀ τρυφὴν, σκεπάσματα ὀ κοσμήματα.

with food and rayment, not delicates, but food; not ornament, but rayment: and resolve that what thy Father carves to thee, is best for thee; the fittest measure, for he knows it, and loves thee wisely. This course our Saviour takes, *Matth.* 6. first to cut off superfluous care, then to turn over on thy God the care of necessaries, he will look to that, thou hast him engaged, and he can and will give thee beyond that, if he see it fit.

Only this is required of thee to refer the matter to his discretion wholly: now in thy thus well regulated affairs and desires, there is a diligent care and study of thy duty, this he lays on thee; there is a care of support in the work, and the success of it, this thou oughtest to lay on him, and so indeed all the care is turn-off from thee upon him; even that of duty, which from him lies on us: we offer our service, but for skill and strength to discharge it, that care we lay on him, and he allows us; and then for the event and success with that we trust him entirely. And this is the way to walk contentedly and cheerfully homewards, leaning and resting all the way on him who is both our guide and our strength, who hath us and all our good in his gracious hand. Much zeal for him and desire of his glory, minding our duty in relation to that, is the thing he requires, and we bending our whole care to that, he undertakes the care of us and our condition: as that King said to his favourite, as perswading to fidelity and diligence in his state trust, do my affairs and I will do yours: such a word directly hath St. *Chrysost.* σὺ μερίμνησον τὰ τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ αὐτὸς μεριμνήσει τὸ σὸν. *If thou have a concern for the things that are God's, he will also be careful of thee and thine.*

The care of duty thus carried is sweet and light, doth

doth not cut and divide the mind, 'tis united and gathered in God, and reſts there, and walks in his hand all the way ; he bears the weight of all our works, and works them in us, and for us, and therein lies our peace that *he ordains for us.* If thou wouldſt ſhake off the yoak of obedience, thou art likewiſe to be ſhaken off thy ſelf, but if in humble diligence in the ways of God, thou walk on in his ſtrength, there is nothing concerns thee and thy work, but he will take the charge and care of it, thy ſelf, and all intereſt; art thou troubled with fear, enemies, and ſnares? untrouble thy ſelf of that, for he is with thee, he hath promiſed to lead thee in a ſtraight and ſafe path, and to rebuke all thine enemies, to ſubdue thine iniquities for thee, and to fight againſt thoſe that fight againſt thee ; no weapon forg'd againſt thee ſhall proſper ; yea, *when thou paſſeſt through the water and through the fire*, he will be with thee ; doth thine own weakneſs diſcourage thee ? hath not he engag'd for that too? ſo lay over that care ; hath he not ſpoke of *ſtrengthning the weak hands, and feeble knees, and that the lame ſhall leap as an Hart?* and tho there is nothing in thy ſelf, but unrighteouſneſs and weakneſs, yet there is in him for thee *righteouſneſs and ſtrength*, righteouſneſſes: no ſcarcity: when thou art ready to faint, a look to him will revive, a believing look draws in of his ſtrength to thy Soul and renews it. And know the more tender and weak thou art, the more tender is he over thee, and the more ſtrong will he be in thee, *he feeds his flock like a ſhepheard*, and the weakeſt is he moſt careful of, *they go in his arms and boſome*, and 'tis eaſie for the feebleſt to go ſo.

Iſ. 26. 12. *Iſ.* 43. 2. *Iſ.* 35. *Iſ.* 45. 24. *Iſ.* 40. 29. *Iſ.* 40. 11.

And for the iſſue and ſucceſs of thy way, let not that trouble thee at all, that is the care he would have thee wholly disburden thy ſelf of, and lay it upon him ;

do not vex thy ſelf with thinking how will this be and that; what if this fall out and the other? this is his part wholly, and if thou meddle with it, thou at once diſpleaſeſt him, and diſquieteſt thy ſelf, this ſin carries the puniſhment of it cloſe tied to't: If thou wilt be ſtruggling with that which belongs not to thee, and poyſing at that burden that is not thine, what wonder, yea, I may ſay what pity, if thou fall under it, art thou not well ſerv'd, is it not juſt, that if thou wilt do for thy ſelf, and bear thy ſelf, what thy Lord calls for to bear for thee, thou feel the weight of it to thy coſt.

But what is the way of this devolving of my burden? there is a faculty in it that every one hath not, though they would do thus with it they cannot, it lies on them, and they are not able to caſt it on God. The way is doubtleſs by praying and believing; thoſe are the hands by which the Soul can turn over to God what it ſelf cannot bear, all cares, the whole bundle; moſt dexterouſly tranſlated thus, *Philip.* 4 6. *Be careful in nothing*, a great word. Oh! but how ſhall it be? why? thus ſays he, *in all things make your requeſts known unto God*, and in a confident chearful way, *ſupplication* mixt with *thanksgiving*, 'twill be the more lively and active to carry forth, and carry up thy cares and diſcharge thee of them, and lay them on God; whatſoever it is that preſſes thee, go tell thy Father, put over the matter into his hand, and ſo thou ſhalt be freed from μέριμνα, that dividing perplexing care, that the World is full of.

No more, but when thou art either to do or ſuffer any thing, when thou art about any purpoſe or buſideſs, go tell God of it, acquaint him with it; yea, burden him with it, and thou haſt done for matter of caring:

caring: no more care but quiet ſweet diligence in thy duty and dependance on him for the carriage of thy matters. And in this Prayer, Faith acts, 'tis a believing requeſting; *ask in faith not doubting*, ſo thou rolleſt over all on him, that is the very proper working of Faith, the carrying the Soul and all its deſires out of it ſelf unto God, ſo expreſt, *Pſal.* 37. 5. *roll over on God*, make one bundle of all, roll thy cares and thy ſelf with them as one burden, all on thy God.

Now, Faith to do this ſtays it ſelf on the promiſe, it cannot move but on firm ground, and the promiſes are its ground: and for this end is this added, *he careth for thee.*

This muſt be eſtabliſht in the heart. (1.) The firm belief of the Divine Providence, that all things are manag'd and rul'd by it, and that in higheſt power and wiſdom; no breaking of his purpoſes, nor reſiſting of his power, *Pſal.* 33. 7. (2.) The belief of his gracious Providence to his own, that he orders all for their true advantage, and makes all different lines and ways concenter in their higheſt good, all to meet in that, how oppoſite ſoever in appearance. (3.) A particular con- Rom. 8. 28.
fidence of his good-will towards thee, and undertaking for thee: now if this be the queſtion; the promiſe reſolves thee, truſt him, and he takes on the truſt, and there is no other, caſt on him thy care, and he takes it on, he cares for thee, his Royal Word is engaged not to give thee the ſlip, if thou do really lay it upon him, *Pſal.* 55. 22. hand it over, heave it upon him, and he ſhall ſuſtain thee, ſhall bear both, if thou truſt him with both, both thee and thy burden.

Inf. 1. The Children of God have the only ſweet life: the World thinks not ſo, looks on them as poor

diſcontented lowring Creatures, but they ſee not what an uncaring truly ſecure life they are called to, while others are turmoyling and wreſtling each with his projects and burdens for himſelf, and at length cruſht and ſinking under them, for that is the end of all that do for themſelves. The Child of God goes free of the preſſure of all that concerns him, laid over on his God, if he uſe his advantage, he is not rackt with muſings, Oh! what will become of this and that; but goes on in the ſtrength of his God as he may, offers up poor, but ſincere endeavours to God, and is ſure of one thing, all ſhall be well, lays his affairs and himſelf on God, and ſo hath no preſſing care, no care, but the care of love, how to pleaſe, how to honour his Lord, and in this depends on him too both for skill and ſtrength, and touching the ſucceſs of things leaves that as none of his, to be burdened with; caſts it on God, and he careth for it, they need not both care, his care alone is ſufficient, hence peace, unconceivable peace, *Phil.* 4. 6, 7.

Inf. 2. But truly the godly are much faulty to themſelves, by the not improvement of this their priviledge, they too often forget this their ſweet way, and fret themſelves to no purpoſe, wreſtle with their burdens themſelves, and do not entirely and freely roll them over on God, they are ſurcharg'd with them, and he calls for them, and yet they will not give them him; think to ſpare him, but indeed in this they diſobey him, and diſhonour, and ſo grieve him, and they find the grief return on them, and yet cannot learn to be wiſe.

Why do we thus with our God, and with our Souls, grieve both at once? let it never be, that for any outward thing thou perplex thy ſelf, and ravel thy thoughts

thoughts as in thickets with the cares of this life, Oh! how unſuitable to a Child of God provided to a life ſo far more excellent. Hath he provided thee to a Kingdom, and will he not beſtow thy charges in the way to't: think it not; he knows you have need of theſe things, ſeek not vain things nor great things in theſe, for that likely is not for thee, but what is needful and convenient in his Judgment, and refer to that.

Then for thy Spiritual eſtate lay over the care of that too, be not ſo much in thorny queſtionings, doubting and diſputing each ſtep. Oh! is this accepted and that, and ſo much deadneſs, *&c.* But apply more ſimply thy ſelf to thy duty, lamely, as it may be, halt on and believe that he is gracious and pities thee, and lay the care of bringing thee through upon him; lie not complaining and arguing, but *up and be doing, and the Lord ſhall be with thee.* I am perſwaded many a Soul, that hath ſome Truth of Grace, falls much behind in the progreſs by this accuſtomed way of endleſs queſtionings; men can ſcarce be brought to examine and ſuſpect their own condition being carnally ſecure, and ſatisfied that all is well; but then when once awaken and ſet to this, they are ready to entangle in it, and neglect their way by poring on their condition, and will not ſet chearfully to any thing, becauſe they want aſſurances and hight of joy, and this courſe they take is the way to want it ſtill: walking humbly and ſincerely, and offering at thy duty, and waiting on the Lord is certainly the better way, and nearer that very purpoſe of thine; for he meeteth him that rejoyceth and worketh righteouſneſs, that waits for him in his ways. One thing, the Chriſtian would endeavour, firm belief for the Church, all the care of that on God, that he will beautifie *Zion*, and

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perform all his Word to her, then think, do I truſt him for the whole Church, and the great Affairs concerning it, and ſhall I doubt him for my ſelf or anything concerns me? do I confide on him for the ſteering and guidance of the whole Ship, and ſhall I be peeviſhly doubting and diſtruſting about my pack in it?

Again, when to preſent and paſt, thou calleſt in after evils by advance, the dangers before, and thy weakneſs; good indeed to entertain by theſe, holy fear and ſelf diſtruſt, but by that be driven in to truſt on thy undertaker, on him in whom thy ſtrength lies, and be as ſure and confident in him as thou art, and juſtly art diſtruſtful of thy ſelf.

Further learn to preſcribe nothing, ſtudy entire reſignment, for that is thy great duty and thy peace, that gives up all into the hand of thy Lord, and can it be in a better hand. *Firſt*, Refer the carving of outward things to him, heartily and fully; then ſtay not there but go higher, if we have renounced the comforts of this World for God, let us add this, renounce even Spiritual comforts for him too, put all in his will, if I be in light, bleſſed be thou, and if in darkneſs even there, bleſſed be thou too; as he ſaith of theſe, *Gold is mine, and Silver is mine*, and this may ſatisfie a Chriſtian in thoſe too; deſire no more of them than their Father ſees fit to give them, knowing that he having all the mines and treaſures of the World at his command, would not pinch and hold ſhort his Children if it were good for them to have more; thus even in the other the true riches. Is not the Spirit mine, and comforts mine, may he ſay, I have them, and enough of them, and ought not this to allay thy afflicting care and quiet thy repinings, and to

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eſtabliſh thy heart in referring it to his diſpoſe, as touching thy comforts and ſupplies, the whole golden mines of all Spiritual comfort and good are his, the Spirit it ſelf. Then will he not furniſh what is fit for thee, if thou humbly attend on him, and lay the care of thy providing upon his wiſdom and love? This were the ſure way to honour him, with what we have, and to obtain much of what we have not, certainly he deals beſt with thoſe that do moſt abſolutely refer all to him.

Verſe 8, 9.

8 *Be ſober, be vigilant; becauſe your adverſary the Devil, as a roaring Lion, walketh about, ſeeking whom he may devour.*

9. *Whom reſiſt, ſtedfaſt in the Faith, knowing that the ſame afflictions are accompliſhed in your brethren that are in the World.*

THE Children of God if they rightly take their Father's mind, are always disburden'd of perplexing carefulneſs: But never exempted from diligent watchfulneſs. Thus we find here they are allowed, yea, enjoyned to caſt all their care upon their wiſe and loving Father, and are ſecured by his care, he takes it well they lay all over on him, yea, he takes it not well they forbear him and burden themſelves. He hath provided a ſweet quiet life for them, could they improve and uſe it, a calm and firm condition in all

all the ſtorms and troubles that are about them. However things go, to find content, and *be careful for nothing.*

Now upon this a carnal heart would imagine ſtreight according to its ſenſe and inclinement, as it deſires to have it, ſo would it dream, that it is, that then a man devolving his care on God, may give up all watch and ward, and need not apply himſelf to any kind of duty, but this is the ignorance and perverſe miſtake, the reaſonleſs reaſoning of the fleſh; you ſee theſe are here joyned not only as agreeable, but indeed inſeparable. *Caſt all your care on him, for he careth for you*: And withal *be ſober, be vigilant.*

Phil. 2. And this is the Scripture Logick, *it is he that worketh in you to will and to do*: Then would you poſſibly think I need not work at all, or if I do, it may be very eaſily and ſurely; no, *Therefore*, ſays the Apoſtle, becauſe he worketh in you to will and to do, *work you out your ſalvation*, yea, and do it *with fear and trembling*; work you in humble obedience to his command, and in dependance on him that worketh all in you.

Thus here, caſt your care on him, not that you may be the more free to take your own pleaſure and ſloathful eaſe, but on the contrary that you may be the more active and apt to watch, being freed from the burden of vexing carefulneſs that would preſs and incumber you; you are the more nimble, as one eaſed of a load, to walk, and work, and watch as becomes a Chriſtian, and for that purpoſe is that burden taken off from you, that you may be more able and diſpoſed for every duty that is laid upon you.

Obſerve thoſe two connexed, and thence gather. *Firſt*, There is no right believing without diligence and watchfulneſs joyned with it, that ſloathful reliance of

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moſt ſouls on blind thoughts of mercy, ſhall undo them, their faith is a dead faith, and a deadly faith, they are periſhing and will not conſider it, do not duely caſt their care on God for their Souls, for indeed they have no ſuch care. *Secondly*, The other thing is, that there is no right diligence without believing.

There is, as in other affairs, ſo even in Spiritual things, an anxious perplexing care, which is a diſtemper and diſturbance to the Soul; ſeems to have a heat of zeal and affection in it: but is indeed not the natural right heat that is healthful, and enables for action, but a diſeas'd feveriſh heat, that puts all out of frame, and unfits for duty, it ſeems to ſtir and further, but indeed it hinders, and does not haſten us, but ſo as to make us ſtumble, as if there were one behind a man driving and thruſting him forward, and not ſuffering him to ſet and order his ſteps in his courſe; this were the ready way inſtead of advancing him to weary him, and poſſibly give him a fall.

Such is the diſtruſtful care that many have in their Spiritual courſe, a hundred queſtions about the way of their performances, and their acceptance, and their eſtate, and the iſſue of their endeavours: indeed we ſhould endeavour to do all by our rule, and to walk exactly, and examine our ways eſpecially in holy things, to ſeek ſome inſight and faculty in their performance ſuiting their nature and end, and his greatneſs and purity whom we worſhip. This would be minded diligently, and yet calmly and compoſedly; for diffident doubtings do retard and diſorder all, but quiet ſtayedneſs of heart on God, dependance on him and his ſtrength for performance, and his free love in Chriſt for acceptance, this makes the work go kindly

and ſweetly on, makes it pleaſing to God and refreſhing to thy Soul.

Inf. Certainly thou art a vexation to thy ſelf, and diſpleaſeſt thy Lord, when thou art queſtioning whether thou ſhalt go on or no, finding in thy ſervice ſo much deadneſs and hardneſs, thinking therefore that it were as good do nothing, that thou doeſt but diſhonour him in all, now thou conſidereſt not, that in theſe very thoughts, thou doeſt more wrong and diſhonour him, than in thy worſt ſervices, calleſt in queſtion his lenity and goodneſs, takeſt him for a rigorous exacter, yea, repreſenteſt to thy ſelf as a hard maſter, him that is the moſt gentle and gracious of all maſters; do not uſe him ſo: indeed thou oughteſt to take heed to thy foot; ſee how thy heart is affected in his worſhip, keep and watch it as thou canſt; but doing ſo, or endeavouring to do ſo, however thou find it, do not think he will uſe rigours with thee; but the more thou obſerveſt thine own miſcarriages towards him, the leſs he will, and to think otherwiſe, and fret, and repine, that thy heart is not to his mind, nor indeed to thine own, to go on in a malecontent impatience, this is certainly not this commanded watchfulneſs, but that forbidden carefulneſs.

Be ſober.] This we have formerly ſpoke of; the Apoſtle having formerly exhorted it once and again in this Epiſtle. It were eaſie to entertain mens minds with new diſcourſe, if our task were rather to pleaſe, than profit, for there be many things that with little labour might be brought forth as new and ſtrange to ordinary hearers. But there be a few things that chiefly concern us to know and practiſe, and theſe are to be more frequently repreſented and preſt. This Apoſtle and other Divine Penners drew from too full

full a ſpring to be ebb of matter, but they rather chuſe profitable iterations, than unprofitable variety, and ſo ought we.

This Sobriety is not only Temperance in meat and drink, but in all things that are of the fleſhes concernment, even that of diet is, though not all, yet a very conſiderable part of it, and that not only hath in it, that one exceed not in the quantity or quality; but even requires a regulating our ſelves in the manner of uſing our repaſt: as we make not careful and ſtudious proviſion, do not take up our thoughts how to pleaſe our palate; ſo even in the uſe of ſober mean diet, we indeavour the mortifying of our fleſh, not to eat and drink to pleaſe our ſelves, or ſatisfie our natural deſire, but for God, even to propound this in our ſitting down to it, in obedience to him; to uſe theſe helps of life, and the life it ſelf to be ſpent in his obedience, and endeavour of advancing his glory.

It is a moſt ſhameful Idol, a Dunghill-God indeed, to ſerve the belly, and to delight in feaſtings, or in our ordinary repaſt, laying the reins looſe on our appetite to take its own carreer: And yet in this, the moſt commonly offend, even perſons that are not notably intemperate, neither gluttinous nor drunken and yet I ſay, have not that holy retained bridled way of uſing their repaſt with an eye upon an higher end.

But this Sobriety in its ample ſenſe binds not only that ſenſe of luſt, but all the reſt in the uſe of their ſeveral delights, yea, and in the whole man, all the affections of the Soul in relation to this World, and the things of it, to be in it as weaned from it, and raiſed above it in the bent of our minds, *to uſe it as if we uſed it not.*

This we ſpeak and hear of, but do not apply our ſelves really to this rule, each hath ſome trifle or earthly vanity, one or more, but eſpecially ſome choice one, that they cannot be taken off from, as Children readily have ſome toy that they ſet more by than the reſt: We have childiſh hearts cleaving to vanity, one ſome Preferment, another ſome Eſtate, Lands, or Houſes, or Money, and drunk in the purſuit of theſe, that when our hearts ſhould be fixed on Divine Exerciſes they cannot ſtand, but reel too and fro, or ſtumble down and fall aſleep. roving after theſe thoughts of it, which we affect, ſtaggering ever and anon, or elſe ſo implunged in them all the time, that we are as aſleep in them.

Therefore theſe two are here, and ordinarily, joyned *be ſober and watchful.* Glutting our ſelves either with the delight or with the deſires and cares of earth makes us ſleepy, the fumes that ariſe from them ſurcharge us, and caſt us into a deep ſleep, a ſecure unminding of God and of our ſelves, the intereſt of our immortal Souls.

The pleaſures of ſenſe too groſs for the Divine Soul, for ſo it is by original, but we abaſe it and make it fleſh by thoſe groſs earthly things, and make it unfit to riſe heavenwards; as inſobriety, intemperance in dyet prejudices the very natural Spirits, making them dull, clogs their paſſage, and makes them move as a Coach in a miry way, thus doth all inordinate uſe and love of inferiour things, make the Soul of a low heavy conſtitution that it cannot move freely in any thing that is ſpiritual, yea where there is ſome truth of grace, yet is it obſtructed and dull'd by taking in too much of the World, and feeding on it, which is no more proper for the fineſt of it, for the Soul, than the courſe

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plowmans dyet is for delicate tender bodies of higher breeding, yea the diſproportion is far greater.

If then you would have free Spirits for Spiritual things, keep them at a ſpare dyet in all things temporal; let not out your hearts to any thing here below, learn to delight in God, and ſeek to taſt of his tranſcendent ſweetneſs that will perfectly diſreliſh all lower delights; ſo your ſobriety in abſtaining from them ſhall be ſtill further recompenc'd with more enjoyment of God, and you ſhall not loſe pleaſure by denying the pleaſures of earth, but change them for thoſe that are unſpeakably better and purer, in their ſtead; he ſhall communicate himſelf unto you, the light of whoſe countenance feeds and ſatisfies the glorified Spirits that are about his Throne.

Be vigilant.] This watchfulneſs joyned with it extends to all the eſtates and ways of a Chriſtian being ſurrounded with hazards and ſnares. *He that deſpiſeth his way ſhall die*, ſays *Solomon*: the moſt do thus, walk at a random, give attendance on publick Worſhip, and have ſome cuſtomary way of private prayer, but further do not eye how they walk, what is their carriage all the day long, what they ſpeak, how they are in company, and how alone, which way their hearts go early and late, what it is that ſteals away moſt of their affection from God.

Oh! My beloved, knew we our continual danger, it would ſhake us out of this miſerable dead ſecurity that poſſeſſes us, we think not on it, but there are ſnares laid for us all the way, in each path we walk in and each ſtep of it, in our meat and drink, in our calling and labour, in our houſe at home, in our journeying abroad, yea even in Gods Houſe and in our

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ſpiritual exerciſes; both there and in private, knew we, or at leaſt conſidered we this, we would chooſe our ſteps more exactly, and look to our ways, to our words, our thoughts, which truly, whatſoever noiſe we make, we really do not; *ponder the path of thy feet*, ſays *Solomon*, and before that, *let thine eyes look right on, and let thine eye lids look ſtraight before thee*, Prov. 4 25, 26. And further, *put away away a froward mouth, and perverſe lips put far from thee.* But firſt of all as the main reaſon and ſpring of all, *Keep thy Heart with all diligence, or above all keeping, for out of it are the iſſues of life.*

Becauſe your adverſary the Devil.] An allarm to watchfulneſs is here given from the watchfulneſs of our grand adverſary, there be other two uſually ranked with him, as the leading enemies of our Souls, the World and our own Fleſh, but here is he expreſly named that commands in chief, and orders, and manages the War, uſes the ſervice of the other two againſt us, as prime Officers under which moſt of the forces of particular tentations are ranked, ſome others there be that he immediately commands and leads on himſelf, a Regiment of his own, ſome ſpiritual tentations.

And we have need to be put in mind of the hoſtility and practiſes of Satan againſt us, for if the moſt were po.'d out, they would be forc't to confeſs that they very ſeldom think on their ſpiritual danger from this hand. As we keep looſe guard againſt the allurements of the World and of our own corruption, we watch not againſt the devices of Satan, but go on by gueſs and ſuſpect nothing, and ſo are readily a prey to all.

The leaſt enemy being deſpiſed and neglected, as Men obſerve, proves often too great, the ſmalleſt appearances of evil, the leaſt things that may prejudge our

our ſpiritual good, while we make no reckoning of them, may do us great miſchief; our not conſidering them makes them become conſiderable, eſpecially being under the command of a vigilant and skillful leader, that knows how to improve advantages. Therefore in things, that we many times account petty and not worthy our notice, as having any evil in them, we ſhould learn to ſuſpect the addreſs of this adverſary, who uſually hides himſelf and couches under ſome covert, till he may appear irreſiſtable, ſeize on us, and then indeed he roars.

And this ſeeking the deſtruction of Souls is (you ſee) markt as all his work, the prey he hunts is Souls, that they may be as miſerable as himſelf. Therefore juſtly called our adverſary, the enemy of holineſs and of our Souls, tempting to ſin, and then accuſing for ſin, as his name here imports, appearing againſt us upon the advantages he hath gained; ſtudies our nature and fits his tentations, knows the prevalency of luſt, or earthlineſs, or that great and moſt general evil of pride, ſo like himſelf, and that is his Throne in the Heart, ſometimes he boweth down, as it is ſaid of the Lyon, *Pſ.* 10. He waits his opportunity craftily, and then aſſaults fiercely, and the Children of God find ſometimes ſo much violence of his tentations, that they ſurprize them, and ſuch horrid thoughts caſt in, as poyſoned arrows or fiery darts, as the Apoſtle ſpeaks; and this his enmity, though it is againſt Man generally, yet is moſt enrag'd againſt the Children of God, goes about and ſpies where we are weakeſt, and amongſt them moſt, againſt thoſe that are moſt advanc'd in holineſs and neareſt unto God

They were once under his power, and now being eſcaped from him he purſues, as *Pharoah* with all his forces

forces, as a prey that was once in his den, and under his paw, and now is reſcu'd, he rages and roars after it.

The reſemblance hath in it, his ſtrength, his diligence, and his cruelty. His ſtrength, *a Lyon*; his diligence, *going about and ſeeking*: His cruelty, roaring and *ſeeking to devour.*

Inf. Is it not moſt reaſonable hence to preſs watchfulneſs, to keep continual watch to ſee what comes in and what goes out, to try what is under every offer of the World, every motion of our own natural hearts, whether there be not ſome treachery, ſome ſecret intelligence or no? eſpecially after a time of ſome ſpecial ſeaſons of grace, and ſome ſpecial new ſupplies of grace received in ſuch ſeaſons, as after the Holy Sacrament, then will he ſet on moſt eagerly, when he knows of the richeſt booty; the Pyrats that lets the Ships paſs as they go by empty, watch them well when they return richly loaden: ſo doth this great περιάγων Pyrate. Did he not aſſault our Saviour ſtraight after his Baptiſm?

And that we may *watch to be ſober*, the inſtruction is military, a Souldier drunk is not fit to be on the watch; this moſt of us are with our ſeveral fancies and vanities, and ſo expoſed to this adverſary; yea, when we have gained ſome advantage in a conflict, or when the enemy ſeems to retire and be gone, yet even then to be watchful, yea then eſpecially; how many preſuming on falſe ſafeties that way, and ſitting down to carouze, or lying down to ſleep, have been reaſſaulted and cut off. Oh! beware when you think your ſelves moſt ſafe, that very thought makes you leaſt ſafe, keep always your Spirits free of ſurcharges, and laviſh profuſion upon the World, applying your hearts

Invadunt urbem ſomno vinoque ſepultam.

hearts to any thing in it, ſiting down to't. Oh! no. *Gideons* Army fit to follow God and be victorious in him, not lying down to drink, but taking of it only as for neceſſity in paſſing. Take our Saviours own word, *Take heed leſt at any time your hearts be ſurcharged with ſurfetings, and drunkenneſs, and the cares of this life*: thoſe will overcharge you, and make you drunk and caſt you aſleep.

Oh! mind your work and your warfare always more than your eaſe and pleaſure, ſeek it not here, your reſt is not here, (Oh! poor ſhort reſt, if it were:) but follow the Lord Jeſus through conflicts and ſufferings: a little while and you ſhall have certain victory, and after it everlaſting triumph, reſt and pleaſure, and a feaſt that ſhall not end, where there is neither danger of ſurfetting nor wearying, but pure and perpetual delight; in this perſwaſion you ſhould be abſtinent and watchful, and endure hardſhip as good Souldiers of Jeſus Chriſt, as the Apoſtle ſpeaks, *not entangling your ſelves with the affairs of this life*, and thus be ready for encounters, ſtand watching, and if aſſaulted, reſiſt.

Whom reſiſt ſtedfaſt in the faith.] To watchfullneſs courage would be joyned, he that watches and yields ſeems rather to watch to receive than to reſiſt the enemy.

And this reſiſtance would be continued even againſt multiplyed aſſaults, for thou haſt to deal with an enemy that will not eaſily give over, but will try ſeveral ways, and will redouble his onſets, ſometimes very thick to weary thee out, ſometimes after a little forbearance interpos'd to catch thee unawares when he is not expected; but in all faint not, but be ſtedfaſt in thy reſiſtance.

οὐδίδωσιν ἀνάπαυσιν οὐδὲ νικῶν οὐδὲ νικώμενος. Plut. *in Vita* Marcel.

This is eaſie ſaid, but how may it be, how ſhall I be able ſo to do? Thus, *ſtedfaſt in the faith.* The moſt of Men are under the power of one of theſe two evils, Security or Diſtruſt; and out of the one we readily fall into the other. Therefore the Apoſtle frames his exhortations and the arguments of it in oppoſition to both theſe. Firſt againſt Security in the former verſe, *Be ſober and watch,* and preſſes that by the proper argument of great and continuing danger. Here againſt diſtruſt. *Whom reſiſt ſtedfaſt in the faith.* And adds an encouraging conſideration of the common condition of the Children of God in the World.

Stedfaſt, or ſolid, *by faith.* This is abſolutely neceſſary for reſiſtance, a Man cannot fight upon a quagmire, no ſtanding out without a ſtanding, ſome firm ground to foot upon, and this faith alone furniſhes, liſts the Soul up to the firm advanced ground of the Promiſes, and faſtens it there, and there it is ſure, even as Mount *Sion,* that cannot be removed. He ſays not *ſtedfaſt by your own reſolutions and purpoſes,* but *ſtedfaſt by faith,* the power of God by faith becomes ours, for that is contain'd and engag'd in the Word of Promiſe; faith lays hold there, and there finds Almighty ſtrength, *and this is our victory,* ſays the Apoſtle St. *John, whereby we overcome the World, even our faith,* ſo it is our victory whereby we overcome the Prince of this World.

Whom reſiſt ſtedfaſt in the faith.] And univerſally all difficulties, and all enemies are overcome by faith, faith ſets the ſtronger Lyon of the Tribe of *Judah* againſt this roaring Lyon of the bottomleſs pit, that delivering Lyon againſt this devouring Lyon.

When the Soul is ſurrounded with enemies on all hands ſo that there is no way of eſcape, faith flies above them,

them, carries up the Soul and takes refuge in Chriſt, and there is ſafe, that's the power of faith, ſets a Soul in Chriſt, and there it looks down upon all tentations, as at the bottom of the Rock breaking themſelves into foam. When the floods of tentations riſe and gather, ſo great and many that the Soul is even ready to be ſwallow'd up, then by Faith it ſays, Lord Jeſus thou art my ſtrength, I look to thee for deliverance, now appear for my help; and thus it overcomes, guilt of ſin, that's anſwered by his blood, power of ſin conquered by his ſpirit, and afflictions that ariſe are nothing to theſe, his love and gracious preſence makes them ſweet and eaſie.

We miſtake if we think to do any thing, or be any thing without him; and we miſtake again, if we think any thing too hard to be done or ſuffered with him: *without me you can do nothing*, ſays he, and *I am able to do all things*, or *can all things*, (ſo the Apoſtles word is,) *through Chriſt that ſtrengthens me.* All things. Oh! that is a big word, yet a true word, and thus made good through Chriſt impowering me; that frees it both from falſehood and vanity. A humble confidence, for it is not in himſelf, but in Chriſt and this boaſting is good, *my Soul ſhall make her boaſt in God*, ſays *David*. Oh! they have only warrant to boaſt and to triumph even before the victory, that do it in that ſtile, and may give a challenge to all the World, to all adverſe powers of Earth and Hell: as the Apoſtle doth in his own and every Believers name, *Rom.* 8. 38. ſee the victory recorded, and in this ſame way, *Apoc.* 12. 11. and *they overcame him*. But how? *by the blood of the Lamb, and the word of their teſtimony*; that blood, and the word of their teſtimony believing that word concerning that blood:

theſe are the ſtrength and victory of a Chriſtian.

Inf. Although then thou ſeeſt thy ſelf the moſt witleſs and weakeſt, and findeſt thy ſelf nothing but a prey to the powers of darkneſs, yet know that by believing, the wiſdom and ſtrength of Chriſt is thine, thou art and oughteſt to find thy ſelf all weakneſs, but he is all ſtrength, almightineſs it ſelf. Learn to apply his victory, and ſo it is thine, be ſtrong, how? *in him, and the power of his might.* But thou wilt ſay I am often foiled, yea, I cannot find that I prevail at all againſt mine enemies, but they ſtill againſt me: yet rely on him, he can turn the chaſe in an inſtant, ſtill cleave to him, when the whole powers of thy Soul are, as it were, ſcatter'd and routed, rally them by believing, draw thou but into the ſtandard of Jeſus Chriſt, and the day ſhall be thine: for victory follows that ſtandard, and cannot be ſevered from it, yea, though thou find the ſmart of divers ſtroaks, yet think, that often a wounded Souldier hath won the day; believe, and it ſhall be ſo with thee.

And remember that thy foiles, through the wiſdom and love of thy God, may be ordered to advance the victory, to put courage and holy anger into thee againſt thine enemies, to humble thee and drive thee from thine own imagined ſtrength, to make uſe of his real ſtrength, and be not haſty, think not at very firſt to conquer, many a hard conflict muſt thou reſolve for, and often be brought very low, almoſt to a deſperate point, that to thy ſenſe 'tis paſt recovery, then 'tis his time to ſtep in, even in the midſt of their prevailing, *let God* but *ariſe, and his enemies ſhall be ſcattered*: Thus the Church hath found it in her extremities, and thus likewiſe the believing Soul.

Knowing

Knowing that the ſame afflictions, &c.] There is one thing much troubles the patience, and weakens the Faith of ſome Chriſtians, that they are ready to think there is none; yea, there was never any beloved of God in ſuch a condition as theirs. Thus ſometimes they ſwell even their outward trials in imagination, but oftner their inward, which are moſt heavy and preſſing to themſelves, and the parallel of them leaſt diſcernable by them in others. Therefore the Apoſtle St. *Paul* breaks this conceit, 1 *Cor.* 10. and here is the ſame truth, *The ſame afflictions*, &c.

Inf. We had rather hear of eaſe, and cannot, after all that is ſaid, bring our hearts to comply with this, that tentations and troubles are the Saints portion here, and that this is the royal way to the Kingdom. Our King led in it, and all his followers go the ſame way, and beſides the happy end of it, is it not ſweet, even for this ſimply, becauſe he went in it? yet this is the Truth, and, taken altogether, is a moſt comfortable Truth, the whole Brotherhood, all our Brethren go in it, and our eldeſt Brother went firſt.

Verſe 10.

But the God of all grace, who hath called us into his eternal glory by Chriſt Jeſus, after that ye have ſuffered a while, make you perfect; ſtabliſh, ſtrengthen, ſettle you.

HIS Divine Doctrine and Exhortations the Apoſtle cloſes with Prayer, as we follow this rule in publick after the Word preached: ſo St. *Paul* frequently, ſo Chriſt himſelf, *John* 17. after that Sermon in the preceding Chapters: it were well if both Miniſters and People would follow forth the ſame way more in private, each for themſelves, and each for the other: and the want of this is mainly the thing that makes our preaching and hearing ſo barren and fruitleſs; the Miniſters of the Goſpel ſhould indeed be as the Angels of God, going betwixt him and his People, not only bringing down uſeful Inſtructions from God to them, but putting up earneſt ſupplications to God for them. In the 10*th.* of St. *Luke*, the Diſciples are ſent forth and appointed to preach: and in the 11*th.* we have them deſiring to be taught to pray; *Lord teach us to pray*, and without this there can be little anſwer or ſucceſs in the other, little ſpringing up of this Seed, though Miniſters ſow it plentifully in preaching, unleſs they ſecretly water it with their prayers and tears.

And People truly ſhould keep ſome correſpondence in this duty, and that if other engagement will not perſwade, even for their own advantage, for it returns unto them gainfully; if much of the Spirit be poured forth

forth on Miniſters are they not the more able to unfold the Spiritual Myſteries of the Goſpel, and build up their People in the knowledge of them; Oh! that both of us were more abundant in this rich and ſweet exerciſe.

But the God.] The Prayer ſuits the Apoſtle St. *Paul's* word in his direction to the *Philippians*, Chapter 4. 6. 'tis ſupplication with thankſgiving, prayer with praiſe. In the prayer or petition, conſider the Matter, the Stile. The Matter or thing requeſted in divers brief words, which though they be much of the ſame ſenſe, yet are not ſuperfluouſly multiplied, for they both carry the great importance of the thing, and the earneſt deſire in ſuiting it: and though it be a little light and unſolid to frame a different ſenſe to each of them, nor are any of the ways that ſuch kind of Interpreters have taken in it very ſatisfactory to any diſcerning judgment, yet I conceive they are not altogether without ſome profitable difference, as the firſt [*perfect*] carries more clear than the reſt, their advance in victory over their remaining corruptions and infirmities, carrying them on towards perfection. *Stabliſh* hath more expreſs reference to both the inward lightneſs and inconſtancy that is natural to us, the counterblaſts of perſecutions, and tentations; and to outward oppoſitions, and imports the curing of the one, and ſupport againſt the other. *Strengthen* the growth of their graces, eſpecially gaining of further meaſures of thoſe graces, wherein they are weakeſt and loweſt. And *ſettle*, though it ſeems the ſame, and in ſubſtance is with the other word *ſtabliſh*; yet it adds ſomewhat to it very conſiderable, for it ſignifies to found or fix upon a ſure foundation; and ſo indeed may have an aſpect to him who is the foundation and ſtrength of Believers,

Believers, on whom they build by faith, *Jeſus Chriſt*, in whom we have all, both victory over Sin, and increaſe of Grace, and eſtabliſhment of Spirit, power to perſevere againſt all difficulties and aſſaults; he is that corner foundation ſtone laid in *Sion*, that they that build upon him, may not be aſhamed, that Rock that upholds the Houſe founded on it in the midſt of all winds and ſtorms.

Firſt, *Obſ.* Theſe have in them that which is ſo primely to be ſought after by every Chriſtian, perſeverance and progreſs in Grace. Theſe two here interwoven, for there be two words importing the one and two the other, and are interchangeably plac'd: this is often exhorted them as their duty, and accordingly ought they to apply themſelves to't, and uſe their higheſt diligence in it, not to take the beginning of Chriſtianity for the end of it, to think it enough they are entered into the way of it, and ſit down upon the entry, but to walk on, to go from ſtrength to ſtrength, and even through the greateſt difficulties and diſcouragments, to paſs forward with unmoved ſtability and fixedneſs of mind. To be aiming at perfection, this we ſhall ſtill fall exceedingly ſhort of, but the more we ſtudy it, the nearer to it ſhall we come, the higher we aim, the higher ſhall we ſhoot, though we ſhoot not ſo high as we aim,

Suaviſſima vita eſt indies ſentire ſeſheri meliorem.

Inf. It is an excellent life, and it is the proper life of a Chriſtian, to be daily outſtripping himſelf, to be ſpiritually wiſer, holier, more heavenly minded to day than yeſterday, and to morrow (if it be added to his life) than to day, every day loving the World leſs, and Chriſt more than the former, and gaining every day ſome further victory over his ſecret corruptions, his paſſions more ſubdued and mortified,

his

his deſires in all temporal things more cool and indifferent, and in Spiritual things more ardent, that miſerable lightneſs of Spirit cured, and his heart more ſolided and fixed upon God, aſpiring to more near Communion with him, particular graces made more lively and ſtrong by often acting and ſtiring them up, faith more confirmed and ſtayed, love more enflamed, compoſed meekneſs making more deep humility. Oh! this were a worthy ambition indeed, you would have your Eſtates growing, and your credit growing; how much rather ſhould you ſeek to have your graces growing, and not be content with any thing you have attained to.

2. *Obſ.* But all our endeavours and diligence in this will be vain unleſs we look for our perfecting and eſtabliſhing from the right hand, without which we do nothing, thither the Apoſtle moves his deſires for his Brethren, and ſo teaches them the ſame addreſs for themſelves, *the God of all Grace*, &c.

This prayer is grounded (as all prayer of faith muſt be) on the promiſe and covenant of God. He is our Rock, and his work is perfect; he doth not begin a building, and then leave it off, none of his deſigns break in the middle, or fall ſhort of their end, *he will perfect that good work, which he hath begun, to the day of Jeſus Chriſt*, Phil. 1. And how often is he called the *ſtrength of thoſe that truſt on him*, Pſal. 18. 30. *Their Buckler, and his way perfect.*

Hence is the ſtability of grace and perſeverance of the Saints, 'tis founded upon his unchangeableneſs, not that they are ſo, though truly ſanctified, if they and their graces were left to their own manage. No, 'tis he, that not only gives that rich portion to thoſe he adopts to be his Children, but keeps it for them, and

them in the poſſeſſion of it, he maintains the lot of our Inheritance. And to build that perſwaſion of perſeverance upon his truth and power engag'd in it, is no preſumption, yea, 'tis high diſhonour to him to queſtion.

But when Nature is ſet to Judge of Grace, it muſt ſpeak according to it ſelf, and therefore very unſuitably to that which it ſpeaks of. Natural wits apprehend not the ſpiritual tenour of the Covenant of Grace, but model it to their own principles, and quite diſguiſe it, and they think of nothing but their reſolves and moral purpoſes, or if they take a Notion of Grace confuſed, they imagine it put into their own hands to keep or loſe it, and will not ſtoop to a continual dependance on the ſtrength of another, rather chuſe that game of hazard, and it is certain loſs and undoing to do for themſelves.

But the humble Believer is otherwiſe ſchool'd, he hath not ſo learned Chriſt, he ſees himſelf beſet with enemies without, and buckled to a treacherous heart within, that will betray him to them, and he dare no more truſt himſelf to himſelf, than to his moſt profeſſed enemies. Thus it ought to be, and the more the heart is brought to this humble ſuiting of that ability, and ſtrengthning, and perfecting from God, the more ſhall it find both ſtability and peace from the aſſurance of that ſtability.

Inf. Certainly the more the Chriſtian is acquainted with himſelf, the more will he go out of himſelf for his perfecting and eſtabliſhing; finds that when he thinks to go forward, he is driven backward, and ſin gets hold of him, oftentimes when he thought to have ſmitten it, and finds that miſerable inconſtancy of his heart in ſpiritual things, the vaniſhing of his purpoſes

and

and breaking off of his thoughts, that they uſually die ere they be brought forth, that when he hath thought I will pray more reverently, and ſet my ſelf to behold God, when I ſpeak to him, and watch more over my heart, that it fly not out and leave me, poſſibly the firſt time he ſets to it, thinking to be maſter of his intention, he finds himſelf more ſcatter'd, and diſorder'd, and dead, than at any time before; when he hath conceived thoughts of humility and ſelf abaſement. and thinks, now I am down and laid low within my ſelf, to riſe and look big no more, yet ſome vain fancy creeps in anon, and encourages him and raiſes him up to his old eſtate, ſo that in this plight had he not higher ſtrength to look at, he would ſit down and give over all, as a thing wholly hopeleſs ever to attain his jonrneys end.

But when he conſiders whoſe work that is within him, even theſe ſmall beginings of deſires, he is encouraged by the greatneſs of the Work not to deſpiſe and deſpair of the ſmall appearance of the work in its beginning, the day of ſmall things; and knows that it is not by any power nor might, but by his Spirit that it ſhall be accompliſht, lays hold on that word, *though thy beginning be ſmall, yet thy latter end ſhall greatly increaſe.*

Looks to Jeſus, ἀφορῶντες, *Heb.* 12. 2. looks off from all oppoſitions and difficulties, looks above them to Jeſus the Author and Finiſher of our Faith, Author and therefore Finiſher; this that royal dignity intereſted in the maintenance and compleating of what he hath wrought, notwithſtanding of all thy imperfections, and the ſtrength of ſin, he can and will ſubdue it, notwithſtanding thy looſe light condition, that wer't eaſily blown away with the leaſt wind of tentation, yet he ſhall hold thee in his right hand, and

there thou ſhall be firm as the Earth, that is ſo ſettled by his hand, that though it hangs on nothing, yet nothing can remove it: though thou art weak, he is ſtrong, and he that ſtrengthens thee, and renews thy ſtrength, when it ſeems to be gone and out ſpent, he makes it freſh and greater than ever before. The word *Iſa* 40. *renew*; *change*; they ſhall have for their own his ſtrength, a weak Believer, and his ſtrong Saviour, too hard for all that can riſe againſt them: *Hominem cum haſt metiri* is here fit, no taking right meaſure of a Chriſtian but that way.

And though thou art indeed expos'd to great Storms and Tempeſts, yet he builds thee on himſelf, makes thee by believing to found on him; and ſo though the winds blow and the rain fall, yet thou ſtandeſt being built on him thy rock. And this indeed is our ſafety, the more we cleave to our rock and faſten on him; this is the only thing eſtabliſhes us, and perfects and ſtrengthens us; therefore well is that word added θεμελιώσαι, *found* you, or *ſettle* you on your foundation. This is the firmneſs of the Church againſt the Gates of Hell; he is a ſtrong foundation for eſtabliſhment, and a living foundation, having influence into the building for perfecting it, for 'tis a living Houſe, and the foundation is a root ſending life to the ſtones, that *they grow up*, as this Apoſtle ſpeaks, 1 *Epiſtle* 2. *chap.*

It is the unactiveneſs of Faith on Jeſus, that keeps us ſo imperfect, and wreſtling ſtill with our corruptions without any advance, we wreſtle in our own ſtrength too often, and are juſtly then neceſſarily foiled, it cannot be otherwiſe till we make him our ſtrength, this we are ſtil' forgetting, and had need to be remembred, and to remember our ſelves frequently

of

of it, we would be at doing for our ſelves, and inſenſibly fall into this folly after much ſmart for it, if we be not watchful againſt it. There is this wretched natural Independency in us, that is ſo hard to beat out; all our projectings are but caſtles in the air, imaginary buildings without a foundation, till once laid on him. But never ſhall we find heart peace, ſweet peace and progreſs in holineſs, till we be driven from it, to make him all our ſtrength, to do nothing, to attempt nothing, to hope nor expect nothing, but in him, and then ſhall we indeed find his fullneſs and all-ſufficiency, and *be more than conquerors through him, who hath loved us.*

But the God of all Grace.] Our many wants and great weakneſs had need to have a very full hand, and a very ſtrong hand to go to for our ſupplies and ſupport, and ſuch we have indeed, our Father is *the God of all Grace*, a Spring that cannot be drawn dry, no, nor ſo much as any whit diminiſht.

Of all Grace.] The God of imputed Grace, of infuſed and increated Grace, of furniſhed and aſſiſting Grace. The Work of Salvation all Grace from beginning to end, free Grace in the plot of it laid in the Counſel of God, and performed by his own hand all of it: his Son ſent in the fleſh, and his Spirit ſent into the hearts of his choſen, to apply Chriſt. All Grace in him, the living Spring of it, and flows from him, all the various actings, and all the ſeveral degrees of Grace; he the God of pardoning Grace, that blots out the tranſgreſſions of his own Children for his own name's ſake, that takes up all quarrels, and makes one act of oblivion ſerve for all reckonings betwixt him and them; and as the God of pardoning Grace, ſo withal the God of ſanctifying

Grace

Grace, that refines and purifies all theſe he means to make up into Veſſels of Glory, and hath in his hand, all the fit means and ways of doing this, purges them by afflictions and outward trials, by the reproaches and hatreds of the world: little known of the prophane world, how ſerviceable they are to the Graces and Comforts of a Chriſtian, when they indignifie and perſecute him, yea, little doth a Chriſtian himſelf ſometimes, think how great his advantage is by thoſe things, till he find it, and wonders at his Father's Wiſdom and Love; but moſt powerfully are the Children of God ſanctified by the Spirit within them, without which indeed no other thing could any whit advantage them in this, that divine fire kindled within them is daily refining and ſublimating them, that Spirit of Chriſt conquering ſin, and by the mighty flame of his love conſuming the earth and droſs that is in them, making their affections more ſpiritual and diſingag'd from all creature delights: and thus as they receive the beginnings of Grace freely, ſo all the advances and increaſes of it, life from their Lord ſtill flowing and cauſing them grow, abating ſins power, ſtrengthning a fainting Faith, quickning a languiſhing Love, teaching the Soul the ways of wounding ſtrong corruptions, and fortifying its weak Graces: yea, in wonderful ways advancing the good of his Children by things not only harſh to them, as afflictions and tentations, but by that which is directly oppoſite in its nature, ſin it ſelf, raiſing them by their falls, and ſtrengthning them by their very troubles, working them to humility and vigilance, and ſending them to Chriſt for ſtength by the experience of their weakneſſes and failings.

And as the God of pardoning Grace, and ſanctifying Grace

Grace in the beginning and growth of it, ſo the God of ſupporting Grace, that ſupervenient influence, without which the Graces plac'd within us would lie dead, and fail us in the time of greateſt need. This is the immediate aſſiſting power that bears up the Soul under the greateſt ſervices, and backs it in the hardeſt conflicts, freſh auxiliary ſtrength, when we and and all the grace we have within, dwelling in us is ſurchar'd, then he ſteps in, and oppoſes his ſtrength to a prevailing and confident enemy, that is at point of inſulting and triumph; when tentations have made breach and enter with full force and violence, he lets in ſo much preſent help on a ſudden, as makes them give back, and beats them out, *when the enemy comes in as a flood, the Spirit of the Lord lifts up a ſtandard againſt him*; and no ſiege ſo cloſe as to keep out this aid, for it comes from above. Iſa. 59. 19.

And by this a Chriſtian learns that his ſtrength is in God; whereas if his received Grace were always party enough, and able to make it ſelf good againſt all incurſions; though we know we have received it, yet being within us, we woubld poſſibly ſometimes forget the receit of it, and look on it more as ours, than his, more as being within us, than as flowing from him, but when all the forces we have, the ſtanding Gariſon is by far overmatcht, and yet we find the aſſailants beaten back, then we muſt acknowledge him, that ſends ſuch ſeaſonable relief, to be, as the *Pſalmiſt* ſpeaks, *a preſent help in time of need.*

All St. *Pauls* conſtant ſtrength of Grace inherent in him, could not fence him ſo well as to award the peircing point of that ſharp tentation, (whatſoever it was that he records;) and the redoubled buffettings that he felt came ſo thick upon him, he was driven to his knees

knees by it, to cry for help to be ſent down, without which he found he could not hold out, and he had an anſwer aſſuring him of help, a ſecret ſupport that ſhould maintain him, *my grace is ſufficient for thee*, though thine own be not, that is, that which I have given thee, yet mine is, that is, it is that which is in me, and which I will put forth for thy aſſiſtance.

And this is the great advantage and comfort, that we have a Protector who is Almighty, and is always at hand, who can and will hear us whenſoever we are beſet and ſtraitned. That Captain had reaſon, who being required to keep *Millan* for the King of *France*, went up to the higheſt turret and cry'd three times *King of France*, and refuſed the Service, becauſe the King heard him not, nor no body anſwered for him, meaning the great diſtance, and ſo the difficulty of ſending aid, when need ſhould require: but we may be confident of our ſupplies in the ſuddeneſt ſurprizes, our King can, and will hear us when we call, and will ſend relief in due ſeaſon, we may be in apparent hazards, but we ſhall not be wholly vanquiſht, 'tis but crying to him in our greateſt ſtreights, and help appears the Hoſt of Enemies poſſibly we ſee firſt, and that ſo great that there is no likely eſcape, but then praying we eſpy the fiery Chariots and Horſemen, and may ſay, *there are more with us then with them*.

The Apoſtle St. *Paul* calls our God, *the God of all Conſolation*, as here he is ſtil'd *the God of all Grace*, and this is our rejoycing, that in his hand is all good, our Sanctification, Conſolation, Aſſiſtance and Aſſurance, Grace and Glory: and this ſtile ſuits moſt fitly with the preſent ſute, that for our perfecting, and ſtabliſhing, and ſtrengthning in Grace, we have recourſe to the God of all Grace, whoſe former gifts do not diſcharge

diſcharge us from ſeeking more, but indeed both encourages us,and engages him for the perfecting of it. It is his will that we have conſtant recourſe to him for all we want; he is ſo rich, and withal ſo liberal,that he delights that we ſeek and draw much from him, and 'tis by believing and praying that we do draw from him; were theſe plyed we would ſoon grow richer; but remember all this grace, that we would receive from the God of all grace, it muſt be from God in Chriſt, there it flows for us, thither we are directed, *it was the Fathers good pleaſure that in him ſhould all fulneſs dwell*, and that for us, that we might know whether to go to.

Now for the further opening up of his riches, expreſt in this title, *the God of all grace*, is added one great act of grace, which doth indeed involve all the reſt; for we have in it the beginning and end of the work linkt together. The firſt effect of grace upon us, in effectual calling, and the laſt accompliſhment of, it in *Eternal Glory*. *Who hath called us to his Eternal Glory.*

For that calling, I conceive, doth not ſimply mean the deſign of the Goſpel wherein the outward call lies, that it holds forth and ſets before us that Glory as the reſult of Grace. But the calling is the real bringing of a Chriſtian to Chriſt, and uniting him with him, and ſo giving him real and firm title to Glory, ſuch a call as powerfully works Grace in the Soul, and ſecures Glory to the Soul, gives it right to that Inheritance, and fits it for it, and ſometimes gives it even the evident and ſweet aſſurance of it, this indeed all the heirs of Glory have not ordinarily within them, and ſcarce any at all times equally clear, ſome travel on in a covert cloudy Day, and get home by it, having ſo much

light as to know their way, and yet do not at all clearly ſee the Sun ſhine of clear aſſurance, others have it breaking forth at ſometimes, and anon under a Cloud, and ſome more conſtantly. But as all meet in the end, ſo all agree in this in the beginning, that is, the reality of the thing, they are made unalterably ſure heirs of it, in their effectual calling.

And by this the Apoſtle advances his ſuit for their ſupport, and eſtabliſhment, and advancement in the way of Grace: the way of our calling to ſo high and happy an Eſtate, did we apply our thoughts more to't, it would work on us and perſwade us to a more ſutable temper of Mind, and courſe of Life, would give us more Noble ſublime thoughts and ways above the World: and the ſtronger were our perſwaſion of it, the ſtronger would be in us ſuch perſwaſions by it. And as thus it would prevail with us, ſo might we uſe it to prevail with God for all needful Grace.

All you that hear the Goſpel are generally called to this Glory; thus it is told you where and how you may lay hold on't, you are told, that if you will let go your ſins and embrace Jeſus Chriſt, this Glory ſhall be yours; it is his purchaſe, and the rights of it ſies in him, and are not elſwhere, and right to him is the receiving him for a Saviour, and withal for Lord and King, to become his Subjects, and ſo be made Kings; and this is our meſſage to you, and you will not receive it, you give it a hearing, it may be, but do not indeed hearken to the motion, and this of neceſſity muſt be unbelief: were you indeed perſwaded that in coming unto Chriſt, you were preſently not only ſet free from a Sentence of Death, that is ſtill ſtanding above your head while you are out of him; but with all intitled to a Crown, made heirs of a Kingdom, an

Eternal

Eternal Kingdom, I ſay if this were believed, were it poſſible to ſlight him as the moſt do, and turn back the bargain, and beſtow their money elſwhere upon trifles of no value, Childrens Commodities, rattles and painted toys? ſuch are your greateſt projects, were it even for Earthly Kingdoms, in reſpect of Chriſt and this Glory provided in him. What a wonder is it, that, where this happineſs is daily proclaimed, and not only you are informed of it, but intreated to receive it, not only is it offered you, but preſt and urg'd on you, and you ſay you believe the matter; and yet the falſe glory and other vanities of this World, amuſe and entangle you, that you cloſe not with this rich offer of Eternal Glory?

But they who do, it is indeed by a call that goes deeper than the Ear, a word ſpoken home to within, a touch of the Spirit of God upon the heart, which hath a magnetick vertue to draw it, ſo that it cannot chuſe but follow, and yet freely and ſweetly chuſes to follow; doth moſt gladly open to let in Jeſus Chriſt and his ſweet Government upon his own terms, takes him and all the reproaches and troubles that can come with him, and well it may, ſeeing beyond a little paſſing trouble, abiding Eternal Glory.

The State a Chriſtian is called to, 'tis not a poor and ſad Eſtate, as the World judges, it is to no *leſs* than *Eternal Glory*, the World thinks ſtrange to ſee the believer abridge himſelf the delights of ſin, their purſuits and graſpings of the common World after gains, or honours, or pleaſures of ſenſe, and they know not the Infinite gain that he hath made, that he hath exchanged this Droſs for down weight of pure Gold. The World ſees what the Chriſtian leaves, but they ſee not what he comes to, what his new purchaſe is, in another

place; they ſee what he ſuffers, but not what he expects, and ſhall attain as the end of theſe ſufferings, which will ſhortly end. But he knowing well upon what conditions all theſe things run, he may well ſay, *how ſmall is that I forſake, how great that which I follow after.*

[*Non magna relinquo, magna ſequor.*]

It is Glory, Eternal Glory, *his Eternal Glory*, Glory, true real glory, All that here is ſo named is no more but a name a Shadow of Glory, cannot endure the ballance, is found too light: a great Monarch and ſo, many Principalities and Provinces put in one after another ſtill no weight, yea poſſibly, as a late politick Writer wittily obſerves of a certain Monarch, the more Kingdoms you caſt in, the ſcale is ſtill the lighter Men are naturally deſirous of Glory and gape after it, but they are naturally ignorant of the true nature and place of it, they ſeek it where it is not, and as *Solomon ſays* of riches, *ſet their hearts on that which is not*, hath no ſubſiſtence nor reality. But the Glory above is true real Glory, and bears weight, and ſo bears aright the name of Glory, which in the Hebrew ſignifies *weight*, and the Apoſtles Expreſſion ſeems to allude to that ſenſe, ſpeaking of this ſame Glory to come, calls it a *far more excellent weight of glory*; it weighs down all labour and ſufferings in the way, ſo far as they are not once worth the ſpeaking of in reſpect of it, it is the *hyperbole*, other Glory is overſpoke, but this Glory over glorious to be duly ſpoke, exceeds and riſes above all that can be ſpoke of it.

Dan: 5:

Eternal.] Oh! that adds much: the glory here ſuch as it is, yet were it laſting, Men would preſume upon ſome more reaſon ſo to affect and think, if it ſtayed with them when they have caught it, and they ſtay'd with it to enjoy it: but how ſoon do they part, they

paſs

paſs away, and the glory paſſes away both as ſmoak as a vapour, our life and all the pomp and magnificence of thoſe that have the greateſt outward glory, and make the faireſt ſhew, it is but a ſhew, a *pageant*, goes thro' the Street, and is ſeen no more. But this hath length of days with it, *Eternal Glory*. Oh! a thought of that ſwallows up all the grandeur of the World, and the noiſe of reckoning years and ages; had one Man continued from the Creation to the end of the World, and in the top of Earthly Dignity and glory admired by all, yet at the end everlaſting oblivion being the cloſe, how nothing were it to Eternal Glory; but alas we cannot be brought to believe and deeply take the impreſſion of Eternity, and that is our undoing.

By Jeſus Chriſt.] Your portion out of him, eternal ſhame and miſery; but by him, even all Glory, and this hath likewiſe an evidence of the greatneſs of this glory; it can be no ſmall eſtate; that the blood of the Son of God was let out to purchaſe

His.] That which he gives, and gives, as his choice of all, to his choſen, his Children, and if there is any thing here that hath delight or worth in it, which he gives in common even to his enemies; if ſuch a World and variety of good things for them that hate him, Oh! how excellent muſt thoſe things be he hath reſerved for his friends for thoſe he loves, and cauſes to love him.

As 'tis his gift, it is indeed himſelf, the beholding and enjoying of himſelf. Now this we cannot conceive. Oh! that bleſſed Day, when the Soul ſhall be full of God, ſhall be ſatisfy'd and raviſht with full viſion ſhould we not admire that ſuch a condition is provided for Man, wretched ſinful Man, *Lord what is Man*, &c. and for me

me, as wretched as any that are left, and fallen ſhort of this Glory, a baſe worm taken out of the mire, and waſht in the Blood of Chriſt, and within a while ſet to ſhine in Glory without ſin? Oh! the wonder of this, how would it ſtir to praiſe, when we think of ſuch an one there, who will bring us up in the way to this Crown, how will this hope ſweeten the ſhort ſufferings of this Life, and Death it ſelf, which is otherwiſe the bittereſt in it ſelf, moſt of all ſweetned by this, as being neareſt it, and ſetting us unto it; what though thou art poor and diſeaſed, and deſpiſed here? Oh! conſider what is there, how worthy the affection, worthy the earneſt eye look of an heir of this Glory; what can he either deſire or fear whoſe heart is thus deeply fixed? Who would refuſe this other clauſe to ſuffer a while, a little while, any thing outward, inward, he thinks fit; how ſoon ſhall all this be overpaſt, and then overpayed in the very entry, the beginning of this Glory that ſhall never end.

Verſe 11.

To him be Glory and Dominion, for ever and ever, Amen.

THEY know little of their own wants and emptineſs, that are not much in Prayer, and they know little of the greatneſs and goodneſs of God, that are not much in praiſes. The humble Chriſtian hath a heart in ſome meaſure fram'd to both, he hath within him the beſt School Maſter that teaches him how to pray, and how

how to praiſe, and makes him delight in the exerciſe of them both.

The Apoſtle having added Prayer to his Doctrine, adds here you ſee praiſe to his Prayer. *To him be Glory and Dominion for ever.*

The living praiſes of God ſpring from much holy affection, and that affection ſprings from a Divine Light in the Underſtanding, ſo ſays the Pſalmiſt, *ſing ye praiſes with underſtanding*, or *you that have underſtanding*, Pſal. 47.

It is a ſpiritual Knowledge of God that ſets the Soul in tune for his praiſes, and therefore the moſt can bear no part in this Song, they miſtune it quite through, their ignorance of God and unacquaintance with him. Praiſe is unſeemly in the mouth of fools, they ſpoil and miſtune it.

Obſ. 1. The thing aſcribed. 2. The term or endurance of it. The former in two words *Glory and Power. Glory*, the ſhining forth of his Dignity, the Knowledge and acknowledgment of it by his Creatures, that his excellency may be confeſt and praiſed, his name exalted, that ſervice and homage may be done to him; which all adds nothing to him, for how can that be? but as it is the duty, 'tis the happineſs of his creature to render it, ſuch as he hath fitted for that; all the creatures indeed declare and ſpeak him glorious, the Heaven's ſound it forth, and the Earth and Sea reſounds and ecchoes it back, but his reaſonable Creature hath he peculiarly framed both to take notice of Glory in all the reſt, and to return it from and for all the reſt, in a more expreſs and lively way.

And in this lower World, 'tis Man alone that is made capable of obſerving the Glory of God, and offering him praiſes; he expreſſes it well, that calls Man the

World's

World's High-Prieſt, all the creatures bring their oblations of praiſe to him, to offer up for them and for himſelf, for whoſe uſe and comfort they are made, the Light and Motion of the Heaven's, and all the variety of creatures below them ſpeak this to Man. *He that made us and you and made us for you, is great, and wiſe, and worthy to be praiſed, and you are better able to ſay this than we, therefore praiſe him on our behalf and your own. Oh! he is great and mighty, he is the Lord our maker.*

Power.] Is here not only ability, but authority and Royal Soveraignity that, as he can do all things, he rules and governs all things, is King of all the World, Lord paramount, all hold their Crowns of him, and the Shields of the Earth belong unto God, he is greatly to be exalted, diſpoſeth of States and Kingdoms at his pleaſure, eſtabliſheth or changeth, turns and overturns, as ſeems him good, and hath not only might, but right to do ſo. *He is the Moſt High ruling in the Kingdoms of the Children of Men, and giving them to whomſoever he will*, and readily pours contempt upon Princes when they contemn his power.

The term *for ever*. Even in the ſhort Life of Man, Men that are raiſed very high in place and popular eſteem, may, and often do out live their own Glory, but the Glory of God laſteth as long as himſelf, for he is unchangeable, his Throne is for ever, and his wrath for ever, and his mercy for ever, and therefore Glory for ever.

Inf. 1. Is it not to be lamented that he is ſo little glorify'd and prais'd that the Earth being ſo full of his goodneſs, is ſo empty of his praiſe from them that enjoy and live upon it?

How far are the greateſt part from making this their great

great work, to exalt God, and aſcribe power and glory to his name, for that all their ways are his diſhonour, ſeek to advance and raiſe themſelves, to ſerve their own Luſts and pleaſures, and altogether mindleſs of his glory; the Apoſtles complaint holding good againſt us all, *ſeeking our own things, and none the things of the Lord Jeſus Chriſt:* true ſome there are, but as his meaning is ſo few, that they are, as it were, drown'd and ſmother'd in the crowd of ſelf ſeekers, ſo that they appear not. After all the judgments of God upon us, how doth ſtill luxury and exceſs, uncleanneſs and all kind of profaneſs out-dare the very light of the Goſpel and rule of holineſs ſhining in it, ſcarce any thing a matter of common ſhame, and ſcorn, but the power of godlineſs, turning indeed our true glory into ſhame, and glorying in that which is indeed our ſhame. Holineſs not only our true glory, but that wherein the ever glorious God doth eſpecially glory, and hath made known himſelf ſo much by that name; *the holy God.* And that which is the expreſs ſtile of his glorious praiſes uttered by *Seraphims* Iſa. 6. *Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of Hoſts, the whole Earth is full of his Glory.*

Inſtead of ſanctifying and glorifying this holy name, how doth the Language of Hell, oaths and curſes abound in our Streets and Houſes, that bleſſed name, that Angels are bleſſing and praiſing abuſed by baſe worms? Again, notwithſtanding all the mercies multiply'd upon us in this Land, where are our praiſes, our Songs of deliverance, our aſcribing glory and power to our God, who hath prevented us with loving kindneſs and tender mercies, hath removed the ſtroaks of his hand, and made Cities and Villages populous again, that were left deſolate without Inhabitants.

Oh! why do we not ſtir up our hearts, and one another to extol the name of our God, and ſay, *give unto the Lord Glory and ſtrength, give unto the Lord the glory due to his name?* have we not ſeen the pride and glory of all fleſh ſtain'd and abaſed, were there ever affairs and times that more diſcovered the folly and weakneſs of Men, and the Wiſdom and power of God? Oh! were our hearts ſet to magnifie him that word often repeated in that Pſalm *Pſal.* 107. *Oh! that Men would praiſe the Lord for his goodneſs and his wonderful works to the Children of Men.*

Inf. 2. But what wonder that the Lord loſes the reverence of his praiſes at the hands of the common ungodly World, when even his own people fall ſo far behind in it, as uſually they do, the dead cannot praiſe him, but that they, that he hath quickned by his Spirit, ſhould yet be ſo ſurpriſed with deadneſs and dullneſs, as to this Exerciſe of exalting God, this is very ſtrange: for help of this,

Direct. 1. 1. We ſhould ſeek after a fit temper, labour to have our hearts brought to a due diſpoſition for his praiſes; and 1. That they be ſpiritual, ſpiritual ſervices require that, but this moſt, as being indeed the moſt ſpiritual of all: affection to the things of this Earth draw down the Soul, and make it ſo low ſet, that it cannot riſe to the height of a Song of praiſe, and thus if we obſerv'd our ſelves, we would find, that when we let our hearts fall and entangle themſelves in any inferiour deſires and delights, as they are unfitted generally for holy things, ſo eſpecially, for the praiſes of our holy God. Creature loves, abaſe the Soul and turn it to Earth, and praiſe is altogether heavenly. 2. Seek a heart purify'd from ſelf-love, and poſſeſt with the love of God: the heart that is ruled by its own intereſt, is

ſcarce

ſcarce ever content, ſtill ſubject to new diſquiet; ſelf is a vexing thing, for readily all things do not ſute our humours and wills, and the leaſt touch that is wrong to a ſelfiſh mind diſtempers it, and diſreliſhes all the good things about it: a childiſh condition it is, if croſt but in a toy, throw away all. Whence are our frequent frettings and grumblings, and that we can drown a hundred high favours in one little diſpleaſure, and ſtill our finger is upon that ſtring, more male-content and repining for one little croſs, than praiſes for all the mercies we have received? Is not this evidently the ſelf-love that abounds in us? Whereas were the love of God predominant in us, we would love his doings and diſpoſals and bleſs his name in all: whatſoever were his will would in that view be amiable and ſweet to us, however in it ſelf harſh and unpleaſant. Thus would we ſay in all, this is the will and the hand of my Father, who doth all wiſely and well, bleſſed be his name.

The Soul thus framed would praiſe in the deep of troubles, not only in outward afflictions, but in the ſaddeſt inward condition, would be ſtill extolling God, and ſaying *however he deal with me, he is worthy to be loved and praiſed, he is great and holy, he is good and gracious, and whatſoever be his way and thoughts towards me, I wiſh him glory: if he will be pleaſed to give me light and refreſhment bleſſed be he, and if he will have me to be darkneſs, again bleſſed be he, glory to his name; yea what though he ſhould utterly reject me, is he not for that to be accounted infinitely merciful in the ſaving of others, muſt he ceaſe to be praiſe worthy for my ſake: if he condemn, yet he is to be praiſed being merciful to ſo many others, yea even in ſo dealing with me is he to be praiſed, for in that he is juſt.*

Thus would pure love reaſon for him, and render

praiſe to him, but our ordinary way is moſt untoward and unbeſeeming his creature, the beſt of them, much more ſuch worms as we are, that things muſt rather be to our mind than his, and we muſt either have all our will or elſe for our part he ſhall have none of his praiſes.

3. That which on theſe two will follow, a fixed heart, if it be refined from creature-love and ſelf-love, ſpiritualneſs and love of God will fix it, and then ſhall it be fit to praiſe, but an unſtable uncompoſed heart can never be, no more than an inſtrument can be harmonious and fit to play on, that hath looſe pins, that are ſtill ſlipping and letting down the ſtrings, pins that never faſten: and thus are the moſt, cannot fix to Divine Thoughts, to conſider God, to behold and admire his excellency, and goodneſs, and his free love. Oh! that happy word of *David* worthy to be twice repeated, when ſhall we ſay it, *O God my heart is fixed*, well might he add, *I will ſing and give praiſe*, Oh! that we would pray much that he would fix them, and then he having fixed them, we would praiſe him much.

Direct. 2. 2. If any due diſpoſition be once attained for praiſes, then muſt the heart ſo diſpoſed be ſet to ſtudy the matter of praiſes.

And that (1.) The infinite excellency of God in himſelf, which though we know little of, yet this we know and ſhould conſider it, that it is far beyond what all the creatures and all his works are able to teſtify of him, that he tranſcends all we can ſpeak, or hear, or know of him. (2.) Look on him in his works, behold not the vaſt Heavens above, nor the firm Earth beneath us, nor all the variety

of

of his works in both, without holy wonder ſtir'd in us, and that ſtirring us to ſing praiſes. Oh! his greatneſs, and might, and Wiſdom, ſhining in theſe, *Lord, how manifold are thy Works, in Wiſdom haſt thou made them all.* But above all that work, that marvel of his works, the ſending of his Son forth of his boſom, and that is the myſtery the Apoſtles do ſo magnifie in their writings, and that ſo much in this Epiſtle, and that the chief incentive to this cloſe in praiſe, aſcribing glory to him. This praiſe looks particularly back to the ſtile in the prayer, the God of all grace, who hath called us to his eternal glory by Jeſus Chriſt, ſo many other mercies, but chiefly for that choice of mercies, to his glory; *who hath called us to his glory*, then look through the work of ſaving his Choſen, ſo redeemed by the blood of his Son, his maintaining his own work in them againſt all the enemies and oppoſitions about it, the advancing it in the midſt of them, and even by them, and bringing them ſafe to glory, that perfecting and eſtabliſhment as in the foregoing words; it is that, that ſo affects the Apoſtle in the very entry of this Epiſtle, that there he muſt break forth into praiſe, Chap. 1. *ver* 3. *Bleſſed be the God and Father of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope, by the Reſurrection of Jeſus Chriſt from the dead.* He begins there in praiſe, and here ends in it, and ſo incloſes all within that Divine Circle. And as we would conſider theſe things in general, ſo his particular dealing with us, his good providence in ſpirituals and temporals, would we ſearch, Oh! what a ſurcharge of innumerable mercies would each of us find, and were we better acquainted with the Holy Scriptures, had more

our

our delight in them, they would acquaint us better with all theſe things, and give us light to ſee them, and warm our hearts, and excite them to his praiſes, who is the God of all our mercies.

Direct. 3. 3. The heart ſomewhat diſpoſed to praiſe, and then ſtudying the matter of it, would be applyed actually to render praiſe. (1.) To aim at God in all, which is continued praiſe, to eye his glory in every thing, and chiefly to deſire that, that his name may be exalted; this is the excellent way indeed; whereas moſt are either wholly for their ſelf ends, or often ſquinting out to them. That Soul is moſt noble that ſingly and fixedly aims at exalting God, and ſeeks this ſtamp on all it ſpeaks, and does, and deſires, all to the greater glory of my God. (2.) To abound in the expreſs and ſolemn return of praiſe this way. *To him be glory*, not a cuſtomary dead ſaying of it over, as is uſual with us, but the heart offering it up. What is ſo pure and high as this exerciſe, the praiſes of the ever glorious Deity? What is Heaven but theſe? and were it not beſt, as we can, to begin it here, and long to be there? where it ſhall never end. *To him be Glory and Dominion for ever and ever.* Amen.

Ver.

Verſes 12, 13, 14.

12. *By* Sylvanus *a faithful Brother unto you (as I ſuppoſe) I have written briefly, exhorting and teſtifying, that this is the true Grace of God wherein ye ſtand.*

13. *The Church that is at* Babylon *elected together with you ſaluteth you, and ſo doth* Marcus *my Son.*

14. *Greet ye one another with a kiſs of Charity. Peace be with you all that are in Chriſt Jeſus.* Amen.

THIS, a kind of poſtſcript, and hath its teſtimony of the bearer and the Apoſtolick form of ſaluting. Withal he expreſſes the meaſure of his writing, that it was *brief*, and the end of it, *that it was to teſtify*, &c. And this indeed the end of our preaching, and we ought each to ſeek it by the word and by mutual exhortations, and ſometimes a few words may have much to this purpoſe, to have our hearty eſtabliſhment in the faith, and not only to believe, but remember that we have the beſt of it, that there is truth in our hopes, and they ſhall not deceive us; they are no fancy as the World thinks, yea when all things elſe ſhall vaniſh, their truth ſhall moſt appear in their full accompliſhment.

The entertainment and increaſe of Chriſtian love, of due

eſteem of one another, and affection one to another is no matter of empty compliment, but is the very ſtamp and badge of Jeſus Chriſt, upon his followers; therefore moſt carefully to be preſerved entire, and unhappy they that by any means do willingly break it. Oh! let us beware of it, and follow peace, even when it ſeems to fly from us.

This *Peace*, that is the portion of thoſe in Chriſt, is indeed within them, and with God, but through him 'tis likewiſe one with another, and in that notion to be deſired and wiſht joyntly with the other.

They that are in Chriſt are the only Children and heirs of true peace; others may dream of it, and have a falſe peace for a time, and wicked men may wiſh it to themſelves and one another, but 'tis a moſt vain hope and nought, but to wiſh it to them that are in Chriſt hath good ground, all ſolid peace founded in him, and flows from him. *Now the peace of God which paſſeth all underſtanding keep your hearts and minds through Jeſus Chriſt.* Amen.

FINIS.